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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

A B Y S S I N I A

**CLOSED
UNTIL**

1977

PART VI

JULY TO DECEMBER 1926

21

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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

ABYSSINIA

PART VI

JULY TO DECEMBER 1926

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141 To Sir H. Johnston No. 291. Tel.	1926	Reference to despatch of 1926 of Sir H. Johnston to Sir H. Johnston.
142 To Sir H. Johnston No. 292. Tel.	1926	Reference to despatch of 1926 of Sir H. Johnston to Sir H. Johnston.
143 To Sir H. Johnston No. 293. Tel.	1926	Reference to despatch of 1926 of Sir H. Johnston to Sir H. Johnston.
144 To Sir H. Johnston No. 294. Tel.	1926	Reference to despatch of 1926 of Sir H. Johnston to Sir H. Johnston.
145 To Sir H. Johnston No. 295. Tel.	1926	Reference to despatch of 1926 of Sir H. Johnston to Sir H. Johnston.
146 To Sir H. Johnston No. 296. Tel.	1926	Reference to despatch of 1926 of Sir H. Johnston to Sir H. Johnston.
147 To Sir H. Johnston No. 297. Tel.	1926	Reference to despatch of 1926 of Sir H. Johnston to Sir H. Johnston.
148 To Sir H. Johnston No. 298. Tel.	1926	Reference to despatch of 1926 of Sir H. Johnston to Sir H. Johnston.
149 To Sir H. Johnston No. 299. Tel.	1926	Reference to despatch of 1926 of Sir H. Johnston to Sir H. Johnston.
150 To Sir H. Johnston No. 300. Tel.	1926	Reference to despatch of 1926 of Sir H. Johnston to Sir H. Johnston.

Printed for the use of the Foreign Office.

CONFIDENTIAL.

Further Correspondence respecting Abyssinia.

PART VI.

CHAPTER I.—ARMS.

[J 2194/24/1]

No. 1.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 9.)

(No. 161.)

HIS Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa presents his compliments to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's consul, Mega, dated the 26th June, respecting the export of arms from Abyssinia into Kenya.

Addis Ababa, July 8, 1926.

Enclosure in No. 1.

Major Miles to Mr. Bentinck.

Sir,

S.S. "Adolph-Woerman," June 26, 1926.

WITH reference to Foreign Office despatch No. 86 of the 13th March, I have the honour to inform you that, before my departure from the frontier at the end of May, I went into this matter very thoroughly with the district commissioners at Moyale and Marsabit. Neither of these officers have now any complaint to make as regards the export of rifles into Kenya Colony. For the present, this practice has entirely ceased owing to Fitaurari Ayella's initiative. I have already informed you, Sir, that up to the time of my departure from the frontier, no orders had been received from the Minister of War, but no doubt by now the Governor of Borana is in possession of these orders.

I have, &c.

A. T. MILES.

[J 2798/24/1]

No. 2.

Note by Mr. Murray.

M. ROSSO, of the Italian Embassy, came to see me to-day under instructions from Rome to talk about the problem of Abyssinian imports of arms. He said that they had received a long reasoned despatch from Rome summarising the developments of this question since the Anglo-Italian *démarche* at Paris last year, when it was suggested to the French that a triangular agreement should be concluded under which the system of transit permits approved by all three Powers would be introduced under article 18 of the new Arms Traffic Convention.

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The French rejected this proposal, and when pressed to produce some alternative suggestion reverted to the rationing scheme which had been mooted several years previously. They proposed that the three Ministers at Addis Ababa should go into this with a representative of the Abyssinian Government. But, according to M. Rosso, the Quai d'Orsay sent instructions to the French Minister at Addis Ababa which rendered any discussions on a rationing scheme completely futile. The Italian Government felt that neither we nor they could afford to let things drift and they thought that the question might with advantage be taken up again in Paris on rather broader lines. It was the aim of the Italian and British Governments to substitute collaboration for opposition in their relations with other Powers, and the explanations and discussions in Paris of the Anglo-Italian Tsana agreement had already served to clear away a good deal of misapprehension and suspicion. If we were to approach the French with similar frankness over the question of arms and make it clear that it was the substance rather than the form that interested us and that we were trying to find a solution for this long-standing source of irritation within the wide framework of a policy of mutual help and co-operation, the Italian Government thought that some progress might be made.

I pointed out to M. Rosso that we entirely sympathised with the aims of the Italian Government, but that there were two difficulties to be got over. The first was that the French could always say that the time for an agreement of the nature which we were now contemplating was during the negotiations at Geneva which led to the conclusion of the Arms Traffic Convention and that it was quite improper now to try and go behind the terms of that instrument to the detriment of a co-signatory, Abyssinia. The other difficulty was that, if we considered the seven years since the war and took the average number of arms imported by the Abyssinian Government during that time in each year, the figure would be far lower than had ever been suggested as a reasonable annual quota when the rationing scheme had been under consideration. I told him that it was quite on the cards that in addition to arms officially imported there may have been a considerable number smuggled in, but even so the French might very well say that we and the Italians were crying out before we had been hurt and that, on the basis of our experience of the last seven years, there was no reason to apprehend any attempt by the Abyssinians to import an unreasonable or dangerous number of arms.

M. Rosso quite appreciated these difficulties as did the Italian Government, but none the less he thought that if properly handled the French might prove more amenable than had been the case hitherto. I told him that before we made any reply to this proposal we should consult Lord Crewe as to the expediency of raising this thorny question again and the best method of doing so.

J. MURRAY.

October 8, 1926.

[J 2980/24/1]

No. 3.

Mr. Holman to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 2.)

(No. 2041.)

Sir,

Paris, November 1, 1926.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that I have given your despatch No. 2888 of the 13th October my careful consideration, and I beg to submit to you the following observations regarding the expediency of now raising the question of arms traffic in Abyssinia and the best method of approaching this delicate problem.

2. I feel that there is no special reason at present why His Majesty's Government should not invite the French Government to reconsider the whole question of arms traffic in Abyssinia. The strong feeling of suspicion which at one time prevailed both in the press and in official circles in connection with the joint representations made by Great Britain and Italy to the French Government on the subject of Lake Tsana and other concessions in Abyssinia appears to have died down, and if the French Government were now approached on the subject of arms traffic with proper tact and discretion I see no reason to suppose that they would refuse to examine sympathetically any proposals which His Majesty's Government might think fit to submit to them for consideration.

3. I would venture to suggest, however, that His Majesty's Government, if they decide to take up this question again, should in the first place approach the French

Government on their own without previously obtaining the official support of the Italian Embassy in Paris in such representations. I am inclined to think that the French Government might view with suspicion, and even resent, any form of a joint British and Italian *démarche*, at least in the preliminary stage. It would no doubt be possible to keep the Italian Government informed of the intentions of His Majesty's Government, and to point out to them that, should the French Government be disposed to examine the whole question of arms traffic in Abyssinia with a view to reaching a satisfactory solution, His Majesty's Government would then propose that the Italian Government should be invited to take part in any conversations on the subject.

4. As a first step I would propose that His Majesty's Embassy should be authorised to approach the competent department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs unofficially with a view to ascertaining whether the French Government would be willing to discuss the question. In the event of their being disposed to agree in principle to such a course, an official note might then be addressed to the French Government proposing a meeting of British, French and Italian representatives either in Paris or London with a view to drawing up some scheme for the satisfactory settlement of the problem of arms traffic in Abyssinia.

5. I shall be grateful if I may receive your instructions in due course as to whether such a line of action would meet with the approval of His Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.

A. HOLMAN.

[J 3101/24/1]

No. 4.

Memorandum respecting Abyssinia and the Traffic in Arms.

THE supply of arms to Abyssinia has been a constant source of preoccupation for the last twenty years. The history of the question up to April 1925 is summarised in the three accompanying memoranda.* It was then hoped that the Arms Traffic Convention under negotiation at Geneva would provide a cut-and-dried solution for a problem which had hitherto defied the efforts of the Foreign Office.

Unfortunately the Arms Traffic Convention, signed in June last year, not only failed to provide a satisfactory solution so far as Abyssinia was concerned, but opened the door to practically unrestricted imports of arms by the Abyssinian Government.

We then set to work, in consultation with the Italian Government, to see whether it would be possible to devise some plan by means of which a check might be imposed on indiscriminate imports of arms. As the result of these consultations it was decided to approach the French Government with a suggestion that a system of transit permits should be agreed upon between the three Governments principally concerned. Before saying anything to the French Government on this subject, on which they were known to be difficult, the Secretary of State on the 11th August, 1925, handed a memorandum to M. Briand outlining the British view and warning him that concrete proposals (i.e., regarding the transit permit system) would be made to him shortly.

The French reply to these proposals, received towards the end of January this year, was unsatisfactory, and argued that the transit permit scheme would be in conflict with the 1925 Arms Traffic Convention. The subject was discussed at some length with M. Ponsot when I had an interview with him in February last. He showed himself appreciative of our difficulties and disposed to be helpful. On his suggestion the problem was referred to the three Ministers at Addis Ababa, but when they came to consider it, the instructions received by the French Minister, or his narrow interpretation of them, prevented any progress being made, and the problem was referred back to the home Governments. We again took counsel with the Italian Government, who eventually—in October last—suggested, through their *Chargé d'Affaires* here, that frank discussions *à trois* round a table with the French Government would probably lead to a solution. Our Embassy in Paris, whilst not exactly optimistic, feels that there is no special reason why we should not suggest to the French Government a discussion of the nature proposed by the Italians.

So much for the historical aspect of the problem. The Secretary of State in his minute enquires whether it is wise to move in the matter of the arms traffic before we

* "Further Correspondence respecting Africa," Part VII, 1922, No. 3; "Further Correspondence respecting Abyssinia," Part II, 1924, No. 12; and "Further Correspondence respecting Abyssinia," Part III, No. 32.

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make progress with the Tsana negotiations. The latter negotiations are likely to be of long duration. Mr. Bentinck will have to choose the most favourable moment for opening them, and the Abyssinian mentality is such that progress is more likely to be achieved by prolonged, gentle and increasing pressure than by any other method. But in the meantime some incident connected with the arms traffic is only too likely to supervene and queer his pitch. There is an unfulfilled order for 100 machine guns which Ras Tafari placed in Belgium, and which we managed to get held up until the outcome of the Arms Traffic Conference of 1925. The Belgians may at any moment ask that opposition to the delivery of these weapons should be withdrawn. Ras Tafari, or some other Abyssinian leader, may place an order in the United States, as happened shortly after the war and led to endless correspondence and difficulties. But, apart from the awkward situation which would arise were the Abyssinian Government to place a considerable order for arms with some "neutral Government," it is always embarrassing for either the British, French or Italian Governments when asked to supply a moderate-sized order to refuse to do so. No one of the three Governments wishes to incur the unpopularity which such a refusal would involve, and at the same time both we and the Italians are acutely conscious that compliance weakens our hands in opposing further, and possibly less reasonable, demands, in the future. I submit, therefore, that it is eminently desirable to arrive at some *modus vivendi* in regard to arms as soon as possible, and, if it can be managed, before Mr. Bentinck gets to real grips with the Tsana negotiations.

The Secretary of State enquires whether it is possible to conduct both sets of negotiations to success concurrently. I submit that the achievement of a *modus vivendi* in regard to arms would improve the chances of success in the Tsana negotiations, whereas failure to devise a *modus vivendi* will leave us where we are at present.

In some respects it is possible that the soreness which characterises Franco-Italian relations at present is a bad omen for the success of simultaneous negotiations with France and Italy. On the other hand the explanations which followed on the Italo-British Tsana Agreement have cleared away a good deal of suspicion, and it would be a pity not to follow these up and take advantage of the more reasonable attitude adopted by M. Ponsot which, it is hoped, still animates his department, although he himself has left it.

It is difficult to assess the extent and degree of the danger to British interests of failure to find any solution for the arms problem. Until some solution is found it remains a septic spot which is liable to poison our relations with the Abyssinian Government and with the French and Italian Governments. If we tacitly abandon the attempt to find some way out of the difficulty there is the danger that more and more arms will find their way into Abyssinia, and we may be unconsciously providing material for internecine struggles on the Chinese model should anything happen to upset the present régime, which admittedly is not stable.

It is suggested that if the French can be induced to agree to discuss the question informally, the aim of the proposed meeting should be to find some definition of the obligations devolving severally and jointly on the four interested signatories of the 1925 Convention under articles 28 and 2 and 3. If they could arrive at an agreed interpretation of the articles in question it would show in what way Abyssinia intended to carry out the promises made in paragraph 1 of article 28 to put into force articles 12 to 18, and how her neighbours were to help her as they are bound to do by paragraph 2 of the same article. In the process the meeting would determine who was to be regarded as the Central Government of Abyssinia under article 2 and, incidentally, would, by ascertaining how the Abyssinian Government intended to issue the import licences foreseen by article 3, see how best to control non-Government orders. Whether a transit permit system or a rationing scheme or some other *modus vivendi* would prove the best way out of the difficulty had best be left to the discussions to determine. It is submitted, however, that frank and unfettered discussion can do no harm and may even help to persuade the Abyssinian Government that her neighbours are not animated by hostile intentions but by the sincere desire to help Abyssinia as well as to safeguard their own interests.

J. MURRAY.

Foreign Office, November 17, 1926.

[J 3101/24/1]

No. 5.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).

(No. 3256.)

My Lord Marquess,

Foreign Office, November 23, 1926.

WITH reference to Mr. Holman's despatch No. 2041 of the 1st instant, I have to inform you that I have carefully considered the proposals made therein for elaborating a scheme for the satisfactory settlement of the problem of the arms traffic in Abyssinia.

2. It seems to me that, until some *modus vivendi* is achieved in the matter of the arms traffic, there is always the danger that if anything should occur to upset the present admittedly unstable régime, internecine struggles on the Chinese model might break out in Abyssinia and produce such a state of chaos that serious damage would be done to the interests of the three neighbouring Powers. In his conversation with Mr. Murray last February, M. Ponsot himself expressed some uneasiness on this score, and, although the latter has now left the Quai d'Orsay, I imagine that his views in this respect would be shared by his successor.

3. Again, there is always a risk that some incident connected with the arms traffic will supervene to render the atmosphere unfavourable for the successful opening of the Tsana negotiations. There is an unfulfilled order for one hundred machine guns, placed by Ras Tafari in Belgium, consideration of which, your Lordship will remember, the French Government agreed might be deferred until the outcome of the Arms Traffic Conference of 1925 was known. The Belgians may at any moment ask that opposition to the delivery of these weapons should be withdrawn. Ras Tafari, or some other Abyssinian leader, may well endeavour to place an order in the United States, as happened shortly after the war and led to endless correspondence and difficulties. But, apart from the awkward situation which would arise were the Abyssinian Government to place a considerable order for arms with some "neutral Government," it is always embarrassing for either the British, French or Italian Governments to withhold their consent when asked to agree to the supply of a moderate number of arms. No one of the three Governments wishes to incur the unpopularity which such a refusal would entail and, at the same time, both His Majesty's Government and the Italian Government are acutely conscious that compliance weakens their hands in opposing further and possibly less reasonable demands in the future.

4. It is, of course, possible that the soreness which characterises Franco-Italian relations at present may make it an inopportune moment to suggest simultaneous negotiations with France and Italy. On the other hand, the explanations which followed the Anglo-Italian Tsana Agreement have cleared away a good deal of suspicion, and it would be a pity not to follow these up and take advantage of the reasonable and not unsympathetic attitude adopted by M. Ponsot, which it may be hoped will still prove to be that of the French Government.

5. It is difficult to assess the extent and degree of the danger to British interests of failure to find any solution for the arms problem. Until some solution is found, it remains a septic spot, which is liable to poison our relations not only with the Abyssinian Government, but with other Powers. The French Government, no less than His Majesty's Government, must desire to eliminate such potential causes of friction and misunderstanding, and this consideration should in itself be enough to ensure their readiness to seek some solution by frank and friendly discussion amongst those chiefly concerned. You will recall that M. Ponsot originally suggested that the problem should be discussed by the British, French and Italian Ministers at Addis Ababa, and that he attached great importance to associating the Abyssinian Government with the discussions. For reasons which it is unnecessary to go into these discussions could make no progress, and I am disposed to think that their *venue* might with advantage be transferred to Paris, where the Abyssinian Government could, if they so desired, be represented by M. Lagarde, who, I believe, enjoys their confidence. In my view the aim of the meeting, which might at least in the first instance be completely informal, should be to arrive at a definition of the obligations devolving severally and jointly on the four interested signatories of the 1925 convention, under articles 28 and 2 and 3. It would then be seen in what way Abyssinia intended to carry out the promises made in paragraph 1 of article 28 to put into force articles 12 to 18, and how her neighbours were to help her, as they are bound to do by paragraph 2 of the same article. Further, the discussions would determine who was to be regarded as the Central Government of Abyssinia under article 2 and,

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incidentally, by ascertaining how the Abyssinian Government intended to issue the import licences foreseen by article 3, would settle how best to control non-Government orders. Whether a transit permit system or a rationing scheme would prove useful as part of the machinery to enable the signatories to carry out their obligations, would be for the meeting to determine. In any case, I trust that the Quai d'Orsay will agree that frank and unfettered discussions can do no harm and may even help to persuade the Abyssinian Government that her neighbours are not animated by any hostile intentions, but rather with a sincere desire to help her to maintain her sovereign rights as well as to safeguard their own interests.

6. The procedure suggested in paragraphs 3 and 4 of Mr. Holman's despatch appears likely to prove more successful than a more formal and direct approach. I am prepared to leave you wide discretion in the matter, and at this stage I do not propose to say more to the Italian Government than that I have so far adopted Mr. Holman's suggestion as to authorise you to sound the French Government informally and unofficially as to their willingness to hold conversations of the nature suggested by the Italian Government. As regards Abyssinian representation, the views of the French Government will naturally merit careful consideration. They may, indeed, prefer that the representatives of the three great Powers should, in the first instance, try to agree amongst themselves on the broad lines of some solution.

7. I shall be glad to learn in due course the result of the action taken by you on this despatch, as it will be necessary to keep the Italian Government apprised unofficially of the way in which the situation is developing.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3286/24/1]

No. 6.

The Marquess of Crewe to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 10.)

(No. 2350.)

Sir,

Paris, December 9, 1926.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 3256 of the 23rd November regarding the question of the arms traffic in Abyssinia, I have the honour to inform you that a member of my staff saw the head of the African Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on the 7th December and enquired what view the French Government would take of the suggestion, as explained in your above-mentioned despatch, that an informal meeting of representatives of the British, French, Italian and possibly Abyssinian Governments should be held in Paris to endeavour to reach some *modus vivendi* in connection with this problem. The member of my staff emphasised the earnest desire of His Majesty's Government to see some settlement of this question reached as soon as possible, making use of certain of the considerations contained in your despatch under reference in support of his statement. M. de Saint-Quentin, while seeming to take a more optimistic view of the stability of the present Government in Abyssinia than that indicated in paragraph 2 of your despatch, appeared nevertheless to agree that the present position as regards the control of arms was unsatisfactory and that some more definite arrangement was desirable. He reverted to the usual argument of the Quai d'Orsay that circumstances had changed since Abyssinia had become a member of the League of Nations, and enquired whether the result of the British suggestion would not be to impose special derogatory obligations upon the Abyssinian Government. In reply, the member of my staff carefully explained that the object of the proposed meeting would be not to add anything to the obligations of Abyssinia under the 1925 Arms Traffic Convention, nor to make any arrangements which might be contrary to the terms of this convention, but would rather be, as explained in paragraph 5 of your despatch, to define the obligations devolving upon the four interested parties in virtue of the convention, and to discuss the best manner in which these obligations might be put into effect by Abyssinia on the one hand and the limitrophe Powers on the other. M. de Saint-Quentin pointed out how necessary it was to pay particular attention to the susceptibilities of the Abyssinians and not to afford the latter any ground for thinking that pressure was being brought to bear on them by the three Powers. The member of my staff hastened to agree with this

observation, and pointed out that His Majesty's Government were of the opinion that it would probably be desirable for the Abyssinian Government to be represented at the proposed meeting. No mention was made, however, of the possibility indicated in your despatch that M. Lagarde might be selected as the Abyssinian representative.

2. M. de Saint-Quentin listened fairly sympathetically to the proposal and promised to refer it to the competent authorities and inform His Majesty's Embassy in due course of the views of the French Government on the question. He made no enquiry as to whether the Italian Government had or had not been previously consulted by His Majesty's Government in the matter, and the member of my staff thought it best not to allude to the Italians during the conversation.

I have, &c.

CREWE.

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CHAPTER II.—FRONTIERS AND MIGRATION.

[J 2369/20/1]

No. 7.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received August 24.)

Sir,

Downing Street, August 23, 1926.

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to transmit to you, for the information of Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain, copy of a despatch from the Governor of Kenya, dated the 12th July, on the subject of the arming of Abyssinian frontier guards with modern rifles.

I am, &c.

S. H. WILSON

Enclosure in No. 7.

Governor of Kenya to Mr. Amery.

(No. 114. Confidential.)

Sir,

July 12, 1926.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge receipt of your confidential despatch of the 4th May last regarding the suggestion made by the Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis that the Abyssinian frontier guards should be rearmed with modern rifles, and to state that I fully concur with the advice tendered by the Inspector-General, King's African Rifles.

I have, &c.

G. A. S. NORTHCOTE,
Governor's Deputy.

[J 3399/8/1]

No. 8.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received December 28.)

Sir,

Downing Street, December 23, 1926.

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to transmit to you, for the information of Secretary Sir A. Chamberlain, copy of despatch No. 151 from the Governor of Kenya, dated the 29th October, on the subject of the immigration of Abyssinian tribesmen into Kenya.

I am, &c.

S. H. WILSON.

Enclosure in No. 8.

Sir E. Grigg to Mr. Amery.

(No. 151. Confidential.)

Sir,

October 29, 1926.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 3, Confidential, of the 9th December, 1925, and your reminder dated the 6th August last regarding the immigration of Abyssinian tribesmen into Kenya, I have the honour to invite reference to my despatch No. 28, Confidential, of the 24th January last and to my telegram No. 66, dated the 19th February, in which my views concerning the policy to be adopted in regard to the Degodia immigrants were fully detailed.

2. Nothing has transpired since the correspondence above mentioned to necessitate divergence from the policy of this Government towards them or any other Abyssinian immigrants.

3. While prepared to assist the Degodia to return should they wish to do so, and in token of friendship towards Abyssinia to facilitate the efforts of any emissaries sent from that country to persuade them to this step, this Government is not opposed to their presence in Kenya, and, in fact, is prepared, subject to the exigencies of administration, to absorb these virile immigrants into the available empty spaces of the Northern Frontier Province.

4. This attitude is further necessitated by the fact that the power to exclude them or repatriate them by force does not, under present circumstances, exist.

5. With regard to future policy, while I agree that it will be to the advantage of the colony that its waste spaces should be filled by vigorous wealthy peoples, and while I consider that as funds permit, the Northern Frontier Province should be developed by means of roads, wells, closer administration and so forth, I see no likelihood of any considerable programme there during the next two or three years. I have no intention of acting so as to invite the inhabitants of neighbouring countries to emigrate hither, but I see nothing to be gained by closing the door to willing immigrants; indeed, to prevent their entrance would be costly and ultimately impossible. In actual fact, it is to be anticipated that such immigration will from time to time occur until the capacity of the border to absorb more newcomers is exhausted. Those already established will then resist further infiltration.

I have, &c.

EDWARD GRIGG, Governor.

CHAPTER III.—GENERAL.

[J 1681/2/1]

No. 9.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Maclean (Addis Ababa).

(No. 254.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 20, 1926.

I HAVE to inform you that I approve generally the line taken by Mr. Bentinck, as described in paragraph 4 of his despatch No. 125 of the 28th May, in discussing the questions of the Special Court of Appeal and the "Règlement judiciaire provisoire" with the French Minister, whose interpretation of the doubtful passages in the Klobukowski Treaty (*cf.* paragraph 6 of the despatch under reference) you should support.

2. In paragraph 8 of my despatch No. 283 of the 20th November last, I instructed Mr. Bentinck to do everything possible to ensure that British subjects should not be liable to more severe punishment in the Mixed Courts than in the consular court. It is most important to ensure that the special court shall not have the power of passing capital sentences, but, if this cannot be agreed, you should insist on the unanimity rule and co-equality of the consul with the judge as the only practical means of preventing the execution of British subjects

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

No. 10.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 1.)

(No. 123.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, July 31, 1926.

ADDIS ABABA despatch No. 96 of 1922, and your reply, despatch No. 122. Revised regulations for Mixed Courts have now been submitted for approval of Corps diplomatique. This provides for establishment of Court of Appeal of five persons, and for a Criminal Court of First Instance, with appeal to above-mentioned court. It also specifies application of law of defendant, and, in general, seems satisfactory apart from details, which can be discussed by Corps diplomatique.

As it is considered essential that regulations be put into force without delay, do you authorise me to use my own discretion in acceptance of them?

Please reply as soon as possible, as a meeting of Corps diplomatique will be held shortly for final decision.

[J 2115/2115/1]

No. 11.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Maclean (Addis Ababa).

(No. 84.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, August 4, 1926.

YOUR telegram No. 123 of the 31st July: Revised regulations for Mixed Courts in Abyssinia.

My reply approving generally line advocated in Mr. Bentinck's despatch No. 125 should reach you next week.

You should be guided generally by 1922 correspondence and my despatch No. 114 of 30th March. Subject to this I authorise you to use your discretion in accepting new Abyssinian proposals.

[J 2451/2/1]

No. 12.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 2.)

(No. 181.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, August 9, 1926.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 123 and your telegram No. 84 I have the honour to submit a preliminary report on the subject of the proposed revised regulations for the Special (Mixed) Tribunal in Abyssinia.

2. Some time ago—before Mr. Bentinck's departure in fact—the French Minister informed me that he was negotiating with the Government with regard to the revision of the original "Rèlements provisoires," which, as you are aware, have remained a dead letter since their introduction in 1922. On the 30th July M. Gausson called a meeting of the Diplomatic Corps to consider the draft of the revised "Rèlements" which had been submitted for his approval by the Abyssinian Government. At this meeting the draft was read out, and certain points which obviously called for comment were discussed. The draft was subsequently circulated to the Legations, copies were taken, and a further meeting was called on the 6th August, when further points, which a closer study of the text had brought out, were put forward. These emendations M. Gausson has undertaken to submit to the Government, and he will in due course inform us of the result.

3. At the first meeting the question was raised of the propriety of considering the question of revised regulations at this juncture, in view of the rumours of the impending arrival of a Swiss jurist. M. Gausson pointed out that he understood that the Swiss judge would probably stay and assist the Abyssinian delegation at the meeting of the League of Nations, and that, on his arrival, he would have to study conditions for some months before being in a position to tackle the drafting of a code, and further, that the Abyssinian Government appeared to be in an amenable frame of mind—possibly with an eye on the said meeting—and that, in his opinion, it was an opportunity not to be lost to obtain some kind of written regulations, however imperfect, to replace the present vague condition of mixed jurisdiction.

4. I may say at once that I consider the revised regulations, which I understand were drawn up by M. de Bellefonds, the French legal adviser to the Abyssinian Government, extremely badly drafted, and in the form in which they were originally submitted, hardly to be considered an improvement on the existing position of having no rules at all, but I think that the amendments proposed at the two meetings will, if accepted, remove the more obvious blemishes.

5. Guided by the instructions in your telegram under reference, I shall use my discretion with regard to acceptance of the regulations, in concert with my colleagues, in so far as civil matters are concerned. As, however, the new draft sets up a new court of criminal jurisdiction, I do not feel that I could properly give, as regards this, more than a conditional acceptance pending a reference to you, no matter what action my colleagues may take. I think it probable, however, that their acceptance will be conditional both as regards civil and criminal matters.

6. As soon as I am in possession of the text in its final form, I shall forward a copy to you, showing full details of the original draft, with the proposed amendments, accepted or rejected.

I have, &c.

G. T. MACLEAN.

No. 13.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 4.)

(No. 140.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, September 3, 1926.

PERSISTENT rumour is in circulation, confirmed by Italian and German Ministers, that Dr. Weininger, honorary Austrian consul here, is going to Geneva on 5th September under contract with Abyssinian Government and with consent of Austrian Government, to establish there a propaganda bureau with special relation to German and British (and, it is said, Soviet) press. It is possible that he will also

take document for Abyssinian protest before League of Nations. I hope within three or four days to be able to telegraph definite information on above points. Pending confirmation, I am extremely sceptical, especially as regards reference to Soviet.

[J 2451/2/1]

No. 14.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Maclean (Addis Ababa).

(No. 102.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, September 8, 1926.

YOUR despatch No. 181 of the 9th August: Special court in Abyssinia. Please inform me by telegram what proposals for new court of criminal jurisdiction will entail before you accept them even conditionally.

No. 15.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 13.)

(No. 142.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, September 11, 1926.

YOUR telegram No. 102.

Main provisions of proposed criminal tribunal are following:—

1. Three judges to be chosen by the sovereign when necessity arises.
2. When the accused is a foreigner, two judges to be foreigners, preferably of the same nationality as the accused's consul.
3. When the accused is an Abyssinian two judges to be Abyssinian, the third preferably the same nationality as the accuser or victim.
4. Appeal lies, in the case of foreigners, to the proposed new Court of Appeal, consisting of five judges, two being Abyssinian, two representatives of the Legation, and one prominent foreign resident drawn by lot. In the case of an Abyssinian, Appeal Court the sovereign.
5. Decision by majority in both courts.

My principal objection to the proposal is, first, No. 5 above, and secondly, that no provisions whatever are laid down for execution of judgments.

Doubtful if any developments will occur pending the absence of the French Minister (see my telegram No. 131).

Despatch follows, giving original text of proposed regulations, with amendments suggested.

No. 16.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 13.)

(No. 143.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, September 13, 1926.

MY telegram No. 141.

Dr. Weininger, Austrian consul, left yesterday for Geneva.

[J 2561/1817/1]

No. 17.

Foreign Office to Consul London (Geneva).

(No. 45. Confidential.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 16, 1926.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to inform you that, according to telegraphic reports received from the Chargé d'Affaires at Adis Ababa, the Abyssinian Government have arranged with a Dr. Weininger, until recently honorary Austrian consul at that capital, to establish a propaganda bureau at Geneva. Dr. Weininger left Addis Ababa for this purpose on the 12th instant, and should reach Geneva towards the end of this month.

2. It is not known with what precise object this bureau is to be established, though it is rumoured in Addis Ababa that Dr. Weininger's duties are to consist mainly in watching and supplying information to the British and German press. The subjects in connection with which the bureau will show most activity will probably be slavery in Abyssinia and endeavours by foreign Powers to secure commercial advantages in that country.

3. I am to request that the activities of Dr. Weininger may be closely watched and any information regarding the work of the bureau be forwarded to this Department with the least possible delay.

I am, &c.

MARK PATRICK.

[J 2622/615/1]

No. 18.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 20.)

(No. 185.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, August 27, 1926.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 256 of the 20th ultimo, enclosing copy of telegrams exchanged with His Majesty's High Commissioner at Cairo on the subject of the succession of the Abuna of Abyssinia, I have the honour to report that the present Abuna has made a very remarkable recovery for a man of his age, and there is no immediate cause for apprehension of a further attack.

2. It is obviously of the highest importance that in the event of his sudden demise we should have a suitable candidate in view whose claims could be pressed upon the Coptic Patriarch, but I think it is advisable to point out that there is more than a mere possibility that, on the death of Abuna Mateos, an attempt will be made to leave the office vacant.

3. The institution of a foreign head of the Abyssinian Church has become repugnant to the Abyssinians, and I am inclined to believe that Ras Tafari would abolish it entirely were this possible. According to tradition, however, the Monarch of Abyssinia must be crowned by the Abuna, and I imagine that this tradition could not easily be broken. Consequently, in the event of the death of the Empress, an Abuna would in all probability be essential, but as there is no immediate prospect of a demise of the Crown, I am inclined to think, as I mentioned above, that an attempt will be made to leave the office of the Abuna vacant for as long a time as possible after the death of the present incumbent.

4. It should, of course, be realised that what I have said above can, in the nature of things, be no more than impressions gathered from hints dropped in different quarters, as no Abyssinian would care—or dare—to express himself explicitly on this subject, but I venture to report the rumour for what it may be worth.

5. A copy of this despatch has been sent to His Majesty's High Commissioner at Cairo.

I have, &c.

G. T. MACLEAN.

[J 2747/2/1]

No. 19.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 4.)

(No. 193.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, September 11, 1926.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 142 on the subject of the new regulations for the Mixed tribunals in Abyssinia, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of the old "règlement provisoire" (which was never put into force) and a draft of the proposed amendments and alterations. As I have only one copy of the "règlement," I would beg that it be returned to me after perusal.

2. As I pointed out in my despatch No. 181, I consider that the new regulations, even if the amendments are accepted, leave much to be desired, and it seems to

* Not printed.

me to have been a mistake to attempt to rush these new regulations through just before the promised advent of a Swiss jurist. This feeling was shared by Count Colli and other colleagues (see paragraph 3 of my above-mentioned despatch). Now that the session of the League of Nations has begun, however, and as it seems unlikely that any progress will be made until M. Gaussen's return from Cairo, there would still appear to be a chance of letting the matter stand until the arrival of the Swiss jurist, and possibly of obtaining something approaching a practical code of procedure.

3. Should, however, the new regulations be put in force as they stand (with the amendments, naturally), I think that perhaps there would be a slight advantage over the present inchoate position in so far as civil matters are concerned, but I strongly doubt the advisability of putting into force any regulations regarding criminal matters which are incomplete and not carefully considered—which is obviously the case with the present proposal. Referring to the lack of any suggested regulations whatever as regards execution in criminal cases, it is, in fact, a matter of great complexity to suggest a satisfactory method, since I doubt if any European (or, in our case, Indian) judicial authority could accept for imprisonment—to say nothing of capital sentences—a person convicted by the proposed Criminal Tribunal. The position of any of the foreign Legations here would, I feel, be extraordinarily difficult if one of their protégés were convicted by the new tribunal on a serious criminal charge, and handed over for execution. Up to the present, such matters have been dealt with by diplomatic negotiations, usually resulting simply in the deportation of offenders, but the establishment of a criminal court will, I cannot help thinking, involve a regularisation of the question of execution of criminal judgments.

4. It is unfortunate that we are dependent, and, at that, simply by usage, on the Klobukowsky Treaty, and I was disappointed that the point raised in the previous paragraph was not pressed home at the meeting of the Diplomatic Corps. It would be of the greatest assistance to me, if and when the question of these regulations is again raised, if I could have your opinion on the draft enclosed,* and your instructions as to the line which I should adopt.

I have, &c.

G. T. MACLEAN.

[J 2926/1817/1]

No. 20.

Consul London to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 25.)

(No. 85. Confidential.)

Geneva, October 18, 1926.

Sir,
I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 45, Confidential, of the 16th ultimo, relative to the reports that a Dr. Weininger was proceeding from Addis Ababa to Geneva in order to establish a propaganda bureau in this city.

2. Enquiries have been made in various quarters but so far I have failed to obtain any information which would suggest that Dr. Weininger has arrived in Geneva.

I have, &c.

H. STANFORD LONDON.

[J 2926/1817/1]

No. 21.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Maclean (Addis Ababa).

(No. 369.)

Foreign Office, November 3, 1926.

Sir,
WITH reference to my despatch No. 365 of the 29th ultimo, I have to inform you that, according to information supplied by Mr. Bentinck, the apparent object of Dr. Weininger's visit to Europe was to start a propaganda paper called "Correspondance d'Éthiopie," the first (special) issue of which appeared on the 25th October, printed in Paris. Subsequent issues will, it seems, all be made from Addis Ababa,

* Not printed.

where all interested are invited to apply ("Casier postal No. 144") by a notice prefixed to the first number.

2. Dr. Weininger is believed to have left Paris for Zurich (Seewartstrasse 23), where he will stay till the end of this month when he intends to return to Abyssinia.

3. I shall be glad if you will obtain copies of each number of the "Correspondance d'Éthiopie" as it is issued and forward them to me if you consider them to be of sufficient interest.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 2747/2/1]

No. 22.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Maclean (Addis Ababa).

(No. 380.)

Foreign Office, November 12, 1926.

Sir,
I HAVE carefully considered the amended "règlement provisoire" and the comments made in your covering despatch No. 193 of the 11th September. The printed "règlement" is returned herewith as you requested.*

2. I agree that, as suggested in the second paragraph of your despatch, the new "règlement" should not be finally drafted and accepted until it has been thoroughly overhauled by the Swiss jurist whose appointment has been promised. It is clearly desirable that he should participate in the preparation of an instrument for the working of which he will be mainly responsible. Further, the present draft appears to me to be somewhat ill-drawn; and ambiguities and omissions in most important respects are only too apparent, and I am not sure that if the draft were subjected to a minute investigation a number of inconsistencies might not be discovered. It goes without saying that the preparation of a draft of this kind requires profound study by a really competent lawyer.

3. In paragraph 3 of your despatch you expressed the view that a definite "règlement" would be preferable to the present inchoate position, and submitted that even the existing draft, as amended, would constitute an improvement on the present unsatisfactory state of things. I share this view, and, subject to the points which are mentioned below, and any other amendments which may subsequently appear desirable, the proposals in the "règlement," taken in their broadest sense, seem to be as good from our point of view as we could reasonably expect.

4. You referred in your draft to the lack of any suggested regulations regarding the execution of sentences in criminal cases, and you expressed a doubt whether any European judicial authority could accept for imprisonment—still less for capital sentences—a person convicted by the proposed criminal tribunal. The question of the imposition of capital sentences by this tribunal is dealt with below. So far as sentences of imprisonment are concerned, I have always acted on the assumption that, in a case where the convicted person was a national of any Power possessing capitulatory rights in Abyssinia, it would be for the convicted man's national authorities to make arrangements for the carrying out of the sentences. I have never contemplated for a moment that British subjects should be committed to serve their sentences of imprisonment in Abyssinian gaols. This point must certainly be made clear in the "règlement." I would, however, point out that you are in error in thinking that no British judicial authorities would be able to accept for imprisonment British subjects who had been sentenced to imprisonment by the proposed criminal tribunal. There is power, as I have recently been advised by the Law Officers, to do this under the Colonial Prisoners Removal Act, and arrangements are now being made to render this practicable.

5. I think it will be most convenient if I enumerate my observations on the "règlement," taking each article in turn:—

(1.) Article 1.—I agree with you that it is most necessary to define precisely the term "crimes." The English word "crimes" (or, as it is more often put, "crimes and offences") covers every offence for which the offender can be punished in this country, ranging from murder to contravention of the speed limits. The word "punished" is used in distinction to violations of private rights, called in English law "torts," for which a person can be made in a civil action to pay damages. On the other hand, the French word "crime" has a much narrower signification, and, I

* Not printed.

think, only covers the more serious offences, whereas lesser offences are classed as "délits" and "contraventions." The question becomes additionally confusing because the word "délit" is, I believe, sometimes also used to cover matters where, in English law, the process would be a civil action of damages for tort. It would be desirable, therefore, that the word "crimes" in article 1 should be so defined as to cover all offences where any punishment can be awarded the defendant by the court, as opposed to cases where the court can do no more than award damages to be paid by the defendant to the plaintiff. To employ English terminology, all crimes and offences should be left to the criminal tribunal and the "Tribunal spécial" should have cognisance of all actions of tort.

(2.) Article 2.—I agree with your note.

(3.) Article 3.—I agree with your note.

(4.) Article 5.—This would be clearer if it were amended to begin: "Subject to the provisions of articles 23 and 24" The word "délit" should be defined so as to limit it to cases where the court can do no more than award damages to the plaintiff.

(5.) Article 8.—I agree with your note, but it may be observed that, as the tribunal will only have jurisdiction in cases of civil disputes between two foreigners by virtue of the written agreement of the parties and their consuls to this effect, the written agreement might itself prescribe whether both or, if not both, which, consuls should sit as assessors.

(6.) Article 9.—I think that the words "ne justifient de leur inscription dans aucun consulat" and the addition, "Il est toutefois permis au sujet étranger de demander la protection d'une Légation *ad hoc*," could be better rendered by simply saying, "Suits between Abyssinian subjects and foreigners whom no foreign consul in Abyssinia claims to protect."

(7.) Article 10.—Subject to the incorporation of the red ink addition, which is important, I am advised that this article can be accepted. But I think its intention might be made clearer if the words "assisté par le consul ou le délégué du consul du ressortissant étranger en cause" were added to the words "et le juge" in the last line but one on page 4.

(8.) Article 12 should be redrafted in such a way that the Abyssinian Sovereign does not nominate the representatives of the Legation and consulates, but only the two "fonctionnaires du Gouvernement éthiopien." The consulate of the nationality of the defendant will nominate their own representative and some other arrangement should be made for providing which other foreign Legation will nominate the fourth member.

(9.) Article 13.—The procedure of impeaching a judgment by "requête civile en revision" or "de prise à partie" is rather foreign to English procedure, and I do not feel qualified to offer any criticism.

(10.) Article 14.—The reference to the "Tribunal criminel" is rather confusing because the method in which appeal should be brought in the criminal tribunal is described in article 5 of the "articles additionnels." It would seem that in place of "Tribunal criminel" here should be inserted "Tribunal spécial ou la Cour spéciale d'Appel."

(11.) Article 15 appears to be badly drafted, since the word "contradictoire" ought logically to come below as one of the grounds on which a judgment can be impeached. It might come in as 1 (a) above the existing No. 1, and the sentence beginning "ou par défaut . . . expirés" ought to be placed in a separate sentence, somewhat to this effect: "In the case of a judgment by default, the periods in which an opposition may be entered must have expired."

(12.) Article 22.—I agree with both your notes.

(13.) Article 24.—I think that the majority opinion at the meeting may be accepted.

(14.) Article 25.—It must be laid down that judges who dissent from the opinion of the majority should be able to record this in signing the judgment.

Criminal Matters (Articles additionnels).

I think that it is essential that this "règlement" should expressly lay down that the Mixed Criminal Tribunal should not have power to pass a death sentence. The existing powers of the British Consular Court in Abyssinia to inflict the death penalty will be abrogated by an amending Order in Council which is under preparation. This action will deprive the Abyssinian Government of an argument in favour of the possession of such powers by the Mixed Criminal Tribunal.

(i.) Article 2.—The Ethiopian Sovereign should not have the power to nominate the European member. One European member should always be chosen by the consular representative of the victim's nationality where it is an Abyssinian who is being tried, or of the accused's nationality where it is a European who is being tried, in which case the consular representative should always be able, if he so wishes, to nominate himself. In cases where it is a European who is being tried and there are two European representatives on the tribunal, some provision should be made for the selection by the consular representative of some other European Power in Abyssinia.

(ii.) Article 5.—It is not made clear in the text whether appeals may be brought from the judgment of the criminal tribunal in all cases. If it is intended that they should be allowed in all cases, it would be preferable that this should be expressly stated. If this is not so, careful consideration must be given to the cases in which no appeal can be allowed. Appeals should certainly always be allowed in cases where all members of the tribunal are not in agreement, and probably in all other cases where the crime of which the defendant is accused is a serious one.

(iii.) Article 7.—I agree with your comments.

(iv.) Article 9.—I agree with your first comment. In regard to the second, I think that an effort should be made to get the English practice permitted in this respect, and that the counsel for the prosecution and the defence should both be allowed to examine or cross-examine the witnesses. If this cannot be achieved, provision should be made that the European representatives on the tribunal should be permitted to interrogate the witnesses, as well as the president.

(v.) Several articles in this part of the "règlement" appear to be missing. There is no article 10, and there is a lacuna between articles 12 and 27, and I am unable to guess what is intended should be provided in the missing articles. Some part of the "règlement" should certainly lay down the maximum sentences for the various types of crimes and should provide what should be the sentences in cases where the tribunal are not unanimous. In a tribunal of three it is possible to decide guilty or not guilty on a majority vote, but as regards the imposition of the sentence, all three members may differ as to the sentence which should be imposed. It might, perhaps, be provided that in such a case the sentence should be that proposed by the judge who takes the middle line.

(vi.) Articles 31 to 35, on the execution of judgments, would seem by their character only to be applicable to the execution of civil judgments, in which case they are out of place. In the criminal section of the "règlement" it should certainly be provided that all sentences of the court in criminal matters should in the case of all European prisoners be executed under arrangements made by the consular representatives of the prisoner's nationality.

The provisions of the "règlement" referring to the execution of civil judgments will require careful consideration. At present these articles are very incomplete and do not make it clear what methods of execution are possible. If it is proposed that there shall be imprisonment for non-payment of a judgment debt created by a judgment of the Mixed Court, this must be done through the Consular Courts in the case of debtors of foreign nationality, and an amendment of the Order in Council would have to be considered to give effect to this so far as British debtors are concerned. The "règlement" should clearly define the other methods of execution against the debtor's property (for example, seizure and sale of his movable goods, or, of execution against his immovable property, the garnishing of debts owed to the judgment debtor) which it is intended should be adopted. It will be preferable from our point of view if the judgments of the Mixed Court should be executed on the property of British debtors directly by the Abyssinian authorities, subject to the consul being given the right to intervene in each case at any stage and to make arrangements for the discharge of the debt when execution must be stayed.

6. You should urge the above on your colleagues if and when the question of the "règlement" is again raised, laying particular stress on the desirability of the Swiss jurist participating in the elaboration of the "règlement" and on the absolute need to deprive the new Court of the power to pass capital sentences.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

No. 23.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 5.)

(No. 151.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, December 4, 1926.

MINISTER of War and Abuna are both seriously ill; doctor says former may last weeks or possibly months, but not more; in the event of death serious trouble is not expected, but Ras Taffari's influence may diminish.

No. 24.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 5.)

(No. 152.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, December 4, 1926.

MY immediately preceding telegram.

Abuna has been unconscious for last twenty-four hours, and doctor thinks that he must die to-night.

No. 25.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 7.)

(No. 153.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, December 6, 1926.

MY immediately preceding telegram.

Abuna died Saturday night.

No. 26.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 15.)

(No. 155A.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, December 12, 1926.

MY telegram No. 151.

Minister of War died early this morning.

(Repeated to Nairobi.)

[J 3329/624/1]

No. 27.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 15.)

(No. 156.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, December 12, 1926.

MY immediately preceding telegram.

If I might be authorised to convey to the Empress message of sympathy from the King "in this double loss which has befallen Her Majesty, Ras Taffari and the people of Ethiopia," I think it would be much appreciated.

Abuna was given funeral of sovereign, and you already realise unique position held by Hapta Giorgis in the country.

[J 3356/624/1]

No. 28.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 113.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, December 18, 1926.

YOUR telegram No. 156 of the 13th December: Personal message of sympathy.

The King approves.

No. 29.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 18.)

(No. 159.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, December 18, 1926.

MY telegram No. 153.

I learn telegraphic correspondence is between Abyssinian Government and Patriarch of Alexandria. Presumably question of new Abuna is being discussed. (Repeated to Cairo.)

No. 30.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 23.)

(No. 162.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, December 21, 1926.

RAS TAFFARI told oriental secretary to-day that Abyssinian Government intended finding a new Abuna very soon [one group undecypherable] from Egypt. (Repeated to Cairo.)

[J 3412/615/1]

No. 31.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 28.)

(No. 234.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, December 6, 1926.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 153 of yesterday's date, I have the honour to report that the Abuna Mattheos died on the evening of the 4th instant.

2. His Eminence had been ill for a few days with pneumonia, the result of a chill contracted when visiting the Fitaaurari Hapta Giorgis, whose early demise is also expected. When I called to enquire after his health on the morning of the 4th instant, I saw the doctor and the ichigi (Abyssinian bishop), who told me that his Eminence had already lost consciousness and was not likely to last through the night. In the early hours of Sunday morning, the 5th December, my oriental secretary received a telephone message from Ras Taffari that the Abuna had died the previous evening and that the funeral would take place at 10 o'clock that morning.

3. I accordingly proceeded to the church with His Majesty's consul and Mr. Zaphiro. On the way we joined Ras Taffari, Ras Kassa, Ras Seyum, my colleagues and all the high officers, who were following the hearse on foot to the Church of the Holy Trinity, near the Empress's Palace. The Empress and her ladies and gentlemen were awaiting the procession in a tent outside the churchyard. Thither my colleagues and I repaired to condole with Her Majesty, who, with her whole court, were very audibly and visibly moved. We then took leave of Ras Taffari and the two other Rases, who, standing on the steps of the church and though playing their part with befitting dignity, showed no outward signs of grief. We returned home before the actual church ceremony.

4. Court mourning will last for a month, I believe, and no business is likely to be transacted with Ras Taffari for at least a week.

5. The Abuna had occupied his high ecclesiastical office for forty-six years. He was appointed at the age of 35, so that he was 81 years old at his death. As Mr. Maclean's despatch No. 185 of the 27th August last will have shown, there is a feeling in the country against the head of the Abyssinian Church being an Egyptian, who is looked upon as in some way under British influence. The higher clergy share this view, and would like to appoint twelve Abyssinian bishops. As, however, there are scarcely any Abyssinian priests sufficiently educated for the responsibilities of bishops, the lesser clergy favour the continuation of the present system, which is, of course, supported by tradition, and they are already asking for a new Abuna. Ras Kassa will no doubt have a great deal to say on the subject, and it will be interesting to watch developments.

I am forwarding a copy of this despatch to Cairo.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[15702]

CHAPTER IV.—RAIDS.

[J 1813/20/1]

No. 32.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 2.)

(No. 106.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, June 22, 1926.

REPORTS just received from Nairobi and His Majesty's consul, Southern Abyssinia, of serious Abyssinian raid across frontier, involving murder of two Kenya police and wounding of another. I made strong representations yesterday to Ras Taffari, who was very concerned and promised to take immediate steps. Full details by despatch.

[J 1906/20/1]

No. 33.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 12.)

(No. 155.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, June 21, 1926.

WITH reference to Mr. Bentinck's despatch No. 37 of the 17th February last, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of despatches from the Governor of Kenya and from His Majesty's consul for Southern Abyssinia regarding further raids which have been made into British territory.

2. I saw Ras Taffari this morning and made strong representations to his Highness, and have, in addition, addressed to him a note, copy of which is enclosed herewith. His Highness expressed himself as deeply impressed with the seriousness of this case, and promised that he would take immediate steps to examine the matter, and to punish those who should be found guilty.

A copy of this despatch is being sent to the Governor of Kenya and to His Majesty's consul at Mega.

I have, &c.

G. T. MACLEAN.

Enclosure 1 in No. 33.

*Sir E. Grigg to Mr. Bentinck.**Government House, Nairobi,**Kenya, May 18, 1926.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to forward copies of two letters* from the Acting District Commissioner, Mandera, dealing with the recent events on the Gurre-Abyssinian border, and particularly with the attack on a party of three police askaris, which resulted in the death of two of their number and the wounding of a third.

2. It will be observed that the Acting District Commissioner, Moyale, has been requested to take the matter up with Major Miles if the latter is available.

3. In view, however, of Major Miles's approaching departure on leave, I shall be glad if you will be good enough to make serious representations to the Abyssinian Government with a view to the arrest and punishment of the offenders concerned in each case.

4. A serious situation will arise on the frontier unless the Abyssinian Government evinces both the will and power to deal drastically with raids perpetrated in British territory by its own servants.

5. A copy of this despatch is being addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

I have, &c.

EDWARD GRIGG, *Governor.*

* Not printed.

[20761]

Enclosure 2 in No. 33.

Major Miles to Mr. Bentinck.

Sir,

Mega, Southern Abyssinia, April 24, 1926.

I BEG to bring the following matter to your notice: Fitaurari Walde Gabriel has again caused great trouble on the frontier of a very serious nature. I therefore report fully the whole matter to you.

I enclose copies of the District Commissioner, Mandera's despatch* on this subject and a copy of a letter I have written to Fitaurari Ayella.

The district which is referred to is on the frontier between Kuffole and Malka Murre (ref. frontier map surveyed by Captain Maude). The Abyssinian country bordering on this part of the frontier is administered by Fitaurari Walde Gabriel under Fitaurari Ayella as Governor of Borana. As you are aware, Sir, the majority of the Gorre tribe migrated to Abyssinia in 1924 and 1925, and were allotted the country north of the line referred to above; lately many of the Gurre have returned to British territory, having found that to be under Abyssinian rule is not quite what they expected. The following incidents which have lately taken place I put down greatly to the fact that Fitaurari Walde Gabriel has endeavoured to stop the Gurre recrossing into British territory, and to reprisals on those who have already crossed.

The following is a brief summary of affairs gathered from the District Commissioner, Mandera's reports:—

Early in January last, a party consisting of twelve Abyssinian soldiers, under the leadership of the following Terfi, Bayena and Balissa, crossed the frontier and looted British subjects of the following:—

- 20 camels.
- 4 rifles.
- 4 bandoliers with ammunition.
- 40-50 sheep and goats.
- 30-40 water pots and a quantity of cloth, axes, &c.

A second party consisting of eight men crossed the frontier later in the month and looted twelve goats from British subjects at Golja, shot one elephant, and returned to Abyssinia. Early in February a third raiding party consisting of eight men, amongst them the following, Aba Kuracha, Walde Eiss, Bayena Gabra-Miriam, Walde Tarik and Mangasha. These looted from the Gurre near Banissa (some 15 miles in British territory) forty to fifty sheep, cloth, &c. This raid was heard of by three native police who were in the vicinity; they followed these raiders and came up with them next morning at a place named Wachuf, fired some shots which dispersed the raiders and recovered the loot. The raiders returned and ambushed the three police, killed one, one died from wounds, and the third, together with the Gurre, were both shot through the legs.

Again in February a party of twelve Abyssinians under the leadership of Aba Wayamu (the right-hand man of Fitaurari Walde Gabriel) looted from British natives near Dadacha Korma Adou (some 25 miles in British territory) three baggage camels, twenty-one sheep, and one female camel; this same party also looted from the Degodia in this district two rifles, two rolls merduff cloth and four bandoliers with ammunition.

Added to this, as natives in this part of Abyssinia now see that there is no law or order, they naturally take advantage of the fact, and have crossed the frontier several times with the one idea of killing the first stray native they see in order to blood their spears and wear ostrich feathers in their hair. On their return to Abyssinia they boast openly of their prowess, and no attempt is made by the Abyssinian authorities to arrest these people.

The head man of Fitaurari Walde Gabriel in this district is Aba Wayamu, who is well known to me as being one of the worst men down here. I have no doubt in my own mind that these raids are ordered by Fitaurari Walde Gabriel, and are carried out by Aba Wayamu with the sole object of getting as much loot from the Gurre before they get too far from the frontier, and at the same time hoping to get Fitaurari Ayella into trouble in his capacity as Governor of Borana.

Words fail to describe what I think of Fitaurari Walde Gabriel, and it is due to officials such as these that the name of Abyssinia becomes discredited throughout

* Not printed.

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the civilised world. I am convinced that he is out to make trouble, and every time my back is turned he at once endeavours to stir up trouble between the different tribes on the frontier and with the Kenya Government.

You will see, Sir, from my letter to Fitaaurari Ayella, that he returned the two police rifles to the District Commissioner, Moyale, and has sent three men to Addis Ababa for trial. I have had a long interview with him to-day, and have told him these raids must stop immediately. He immediately wrote to Fitaaurari Walde Gabriel ordering this, and also that all those implicated in these raids were to be arrested; he also ordered him to meet me at Moyale next week. I doubt his carrying out these orders; I am certain he will plead his old excuse of sickness. I therefore venture to ask, Sir, that the strongest representation be made to the Minister for War in order that Fitaaurari Walde Gabriel may be removed from here immediately.

You will see the absolute impossibility of any improvement down here until this old scoundrel is removed. You will remember, Sir, that the Minister for War informed you at our interview with him in February that he had always pleaded sickness. He promised you he would order him up to Addis Ababa at once. The Minister for War has either not done this or Walde Gabriel has refused to obey his orders.

In my humble opinion, I consider the Ethiopian Government should be made to pay compensation for the dead and wounded police. The Abyssinian Government cannot argue that the police were killed by "shiftas." The Abyssinians concerned are known by name, and can be identified as all being soldiers of Fitaaurari Walde Gabriel.

Punishment of all Abyssinians directly or indirectly concerned. By "indirectly" I mean those who encouraged the raids and did not actually take part.

Return of all looted stock to the natives concerned. If Fitaaurari Walde Gabriel and his so-called soldiers are removed from this province, Fitaaurari Ayella will have a chance of showing his capabilities of administering this area, and I am certain he will be as successful as he has been in the west of his province. He has several good officers he can place in this district, and I do not think that an affair of this sort will take place again.

I have, &c.

A. T. MILES, Major.

Enclosure 3 in No. 33.

Major Miles to Fitaaurari Ayella, Governor of Borana for Fitaaurari Hapta Georgis.

(After greetings.)

Mega, Southern Abyssinia, April 23, 1926.

I AM sorry directly on my return from Addis Ababa to have to write and protest strongly to you on the behaviour of Fitaaurari Walde Gabriel and his soldiers in the east of your province. The D.C., Moyale, has already informed you of the crossing of the frontier by Fitaaurari Walde Gabriel's soldiers and of the killing of two British police and of the wounding of a third, also of the looting of 4 rifles, 20 camels, 40-50 sheep from British subjects by these same people. The D.C., Moyale, has informed me you have handed to him the two police rifles, and you have informed me that you have sent up to Addis Ababa for trial the three following men who were implicated in the killing of the police—Assur a Tigri, Egiggue a Gojam and Bayena a Tigri. This is good.

Again I have heard from the D.C., Mandera, that Fitaaurari Walde Gabriel's soldiers, under the leadership of Aba Wayamu, have again crossed the frontier near Duducha Korma Adoua, and have looted from British subjects the following: From Adbil Alio, 3 baggage camels and a rifle; from Ido Mamu, 21 goats and a female camel; and from other natives, 8 baggage camels, 30 water pots, 2 rifles, 9 tagas of merduff and 4 bandoliers with ammunition.

As the natives of that country now see that there is no law or order, two Gabbra, by names Kuno Sargo and Robleh Sargo, living in Abyssinia at Galgallo, killed two British subjects near Daducha Korma Adoua, in January last.

You will see that all this is very serious, and although I know that the soldiers implicated in these affairs belong to Fitaaurari Walde Gabriel, I must insist that you, as Governor of Borana, stop these soldiers crossing the frontier, looting British tribes, send up the guilty to Addis Ababa for trial and return the looted stock to the D.C., Moyale.

The names of Fitaaurari Walde Gabriel's soldiers who are known to be implicated in these raids are the following:—

Aba Wayamu,
Walde Eiss,
Walde Tarak,
Gabra Miriam,
Mangasha.

Fitaaurari Walde Gabriel and all Abyssinians well know the red line as agreed to by the British Government and the Emperor Menelik; please warn Fitaaurari Walde Gabriel that any of his soldiers found across the frontier in British territory will be regarded as shiftas and shot at on sight.

It is a pity that Fitaaurari Walde Gabriel should upset the friendly relations existing between our two countries on this frontier, when you have done so much to help to keep the frontier peaceful.

I am reporting this matter fully, and also sending a copy of this letter to His Britannic Majesty's Minister, Addis Ababa.

A. T. MILES, Major.

Enclosure 4 in No. 33.

Mr. Maclean to Ras Taffari.

Your Imperial Highness,

Addis Ababa, June 21, 1926.

WITH reference to the conversation which I had the honour of having with your Imperial Highness to-day, it is my disagreeable duty to draw your serious attention to a recent series of raids into British territory in Gurreh (Boran), culminating in the shocking murder of two Kenya Government police and the serious wounding of a third policeman and a Gurreh guide.

2. According to the proposal which your Imperial Highness was good enough to accept, I send you full details of the reports received from Major Miles, His Majesty's consul at Mega, and from the Governor of Kenya:—

3. "A party of eight Abyssinian askaris from the Galgalo area, led by one Aba Bora, who is second in command to Aba Wayamu (Abyssinian name Zagayeh), and including a man named Bayana and two others named Weldi, one being a Grazmatch, crossed the border near Jara and proceeded to Takabba area, some 30 to 40 miles within British territory. They there shot an elephant and returned by Terkalai and Bannisa, looting some forty goats from Gabbra and Gurreh on their way, and also three camel-loads of other property—cloth, kibuyus, honey, knives and axes.

4. "On the 11th February three police who were at Wadada got news of the raiders that evening; they followed the track and caught up with the raiders about 1 P.M. next day, the 12th, at Wacuf, north of Bannisa. They fired three shots, and the raiders dispersed and left the stock. The police collected this and started driving it towards Bannisa; meanwhile, the raiders, seeing there were only three police, worked round through bush and ambushed them. The Gurreh guide who accompanied the police was armed only with a spear, was shot first, through both legs; then the Nandi policeman, Kabichi Kiptai, No. 9193, was shot twice in the body and once in the head; then Yassin Awad, No. 9207, was shot through both legs, and Jama Ali, No. 7162, in the hip, thigh and knee. The police put up a plucky fight, but had no chance, being all wounded in the first discharges and being ambushed from the front and flank. The Abyssinians, when all were down, took their rifles, ammunition and equipment, and stripped them naked. One man tore off the puttie with which Police Constable Jama Ali had bandaged his broken thighs, thus smashing the bone still further; the police were left thus for a day and a night in the bush; the Nandi died before night fell and his body was eaten by hyænas; the wounded man had difficulty in keeping off the hyænas through the night. They were found by Gurreh on the evening of Saturday, the 13th, and taken to a manyatta near Wacuf that night and thence to Bannisa, where Police Constable Jama Ali died of his wounds.

5. "We have since heard that three of those raiders have been arrested by Fitaaurari Ayella and are being sent up here for trial. Also two of the rifles have

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been returned. The remaining raiders ran away to Dejatch Balcha's country. Fitaurari Ayella has applied to Dejatch Balcha to help him to arrest the raiders.

6. "This horrible crime is the culminating point of a series of troubles in this district, as is made clear from another report from which the following items are taken:—

"In December, a Degodia girl was murdered at Galesa Guimwen, the perpetrators still not identified.

"In January, two Jibrahil Degodias were murdered at Dedacha Korma Adou by Gabbra from Galgalo. The murderers have been proved to be Kuna Sargo and Roble Sargo, sons of Sargo Bodicha from Uko's village near Galgalo.

"In February, a looting expedition was carried out in British territory—Hari Mamu, east of Dedacha Korma Adou—by the Abyssinian askari in charge of the Gurreh at Galgalo themselves, in which a large quantity of property was stolen, and in February, also, the shocking murders described above were committed."

7. Your Imperial Highness will readily understand that the seriousness of the matter is greatly increased by the fact that the guilty persons are actually those who are responsible for keeping the peace on the frontier, that is, the askaris of Fitaurari Walde Gabriel, and it is a most deplorable thing that the harmonious relations between our two Governments should be threatened by the lawless action of persons who are themselves servants of the Abyssinian Government.

8. I have been informed, moreover, that the principal responsibility for all these troubles rests with Fitaurari Walde Gabriel, who is in charge of the particular district, and who, it is said, actually encourages these raids.

9. I would therefore be grateful if your Imperial Highness would cause immediate steps to be taken to punish in an exemplary manner those responsible for the crime, and in particular the instigator of them, the Fataurari Walde Gabriel; also I would request that the looted police equipment and other Government property, as well as stock and goods stolen from the natives, be returned at once. I am awaiting instructions from my Government as to the compensation to be paid for the murder and wounding of the police.

10. In expressing my conviction that your Imperial Highness will share my sincere regret that such incidents should be allowed to threaten the friendly relations which happily exist between us, and that you will soon enable me to report to my Government that this matter has been settled in such an exemplary manner as to prevent the recurrence of these appalling crimes on the frontiers, I avail, &c.

G. T. MACLEAN.

[J 1906/20/1]

No. 34.

Foreign Office to Colonial Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 15, 1926.

WITH reference to the letter from this department of the 5th instant, I am directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to request you to lay before Mr. Secretary Amery the accompanying copy of a despatch* from the British Chargé d'Affaires at Addis Ababa on the subject of Abyssinian raids made into British territory early this year.

2. Mr. Amery will observe that Mr. Maclean has already addressed a strong protest to the Abyssinian Government and appears to be exerting himself to the utmost to obtain redress. Sir Austen Chamberlain will be grateful if he may be furnished with Mr. Amery's observations generally, and at the same time may be informed whether in his opinion compensation should be demanded for the murder and wounding of the police, and, if so, of what nature and extent.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 2195/20/1]

No. 35.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 9.)

(No. 162.)

HIS Majesty's representative at Addis Ababa presents his compliments to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of a note from Ras Tafari dated the 7th July respecting raids into British territory.

Addis Ababa, July 9, 1926.

Enclosure in No. 35.

Ras Tafari to Mr. Maclean.

(After greetings.)

Addis Ababa, July 7, 1926.

I HAVE seen your letter of the 21st June, 1926, containing the reports of Major Miles and the Governor of Kenya regarding the incidents which occurred in Boran. According to your previous verbal information that you held Fitaurari Wolde Gabriel responsible for the matter in question, I have arranged that he should come up here. The three men who are being sent up here by Fitaurari Ayella will be examined on their arrival as soon as possible. With regard to the other offenders, who you said have run away to Dejatch Balcha's country, I have sent orders that he should cause a search to be made in order to find and send them up here. We are very anxious that these men, who you said have done wrong, should be examined on their arrival so that we should be able to find out the truth.

(Seal of Ras Tafari.)

[J 2270/20/1]

No. 36.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received August 16.)

Sir,

Downing Street, August 14, 1926.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th July transmitting a copy of a despatch from the British Chargé d'Affaires at Addis Ababa on the subject of the Abyssinian raids into British territory; and to transmit to you, to be laid before Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain, a copy of a despatch and its enclosures* from the Governor of Kenya in which he reports a further raid by members of the Aulihan tribe upon the police post at Muddo Erri and on villages of the Gurreh tribe. A copy of the reply* which is being returned to the Governor is also enclosed.

2. While Mr. Amery observes with satisfaction that the British Chargé d'Affaires is making every effort to obtain redress for these raids, he trusts that the matter will continue to be pressed on the Abyssinian Government as desired by the Governor of Kenya in his despatch to the British Minister of the 16th June, with a view not only to the arrest and punishment of the offenders and the return of stock but of the payment of compensation to the relations of the police who lost their lives.

3. The Governor of Kenya has been asked by telegraph for his views as to the nature and extent of the compensation which he considers should be demanded, and a further letter will be addressed to you on this point when his reply is received.

I am, &c.

(For Under-Secretary of State),

HAROLD T. ALLEN.

[J 2353/20/1]

No. 37.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 23.)

(No. 177.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, July 27, 1926.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 219 of the 29th June regarding a raid into British territory in the Gurreh district of Kenya. This has presumably crossed my despatch No. 155 of the 21st June in which I enclosed copy of the note addressed to Ras Tafari on the subject, and you will also have received my despatch No. 162 of the 9th instant transmitting copy of His Highness's reply.

2. I have also received from the Governor of Kenya a report giving details of three further raids during the month of March, and have to-day made strong verbal representations in addition to sending a note, copy of which I enclose herewith. I pointed out the extreme danger of allowing the situation to develop into what was practically a local war. Ras Tafari expressed deep concern, referred to his obligations under the treaty of 1897, and promised to take all possible steps to put a stop to these raids.

I have, &c.

G. T. MACLEAN.

Enclosure in No. 37.

Mr. Maclean to Ras Tafari.

Your Imperial Highness,

Addis Ababa, July 24, 1926.

WITH reference to my note of the 21st June, it is my disagreeable duty to inform Your Imperial Highness that (from reports received from the Governor of Kenya) raids are still continuing to take place from Abyssinia over the Dawa River into the Gurreh district of Kenya.

On the 11th March, twenty-five Aulihan Somalis from Abyssinia looted about 140 cattle at Gombissa.

On the 17th March, about 200 Aulihan from Abyssinia looted about 450 cattle and 2,500 sheep and goats round Gududie, killing two men and two women and wounding two men and one woman.

On the 31st March, about 400 Aulihan looted between 500 and 600 camels and 2,500 cattle in the Galicha area. They killed one policeman, one police guide and four Gurreh, and took one police rifle, looting the police patrol camp, where they got the blankets, rations and personal effects of eight men.

Your Imperial Highness will see from the above that there must be grave lack of control by the Abyssinian frontier authorities in this region, which, indeed, was made clear by the references to the Fitaaurari Wolde Gabriel in my note above referred to. The condition of that part of the frontier seems, from the reports which I have received, to be drifting into a state perilously resembling a local war, and I would earnestly beg Your Imperial Highness so take immediate steps to place a strong, active and trustworthy official in charge of this district with instructions to take the severest possible measures to check the predatory proclivities of the natives there.

I must also request that the looted stock and personal effects be returned and that suitable compensation be paid for those who have been killed.

I avail, &c.

G. T. MACLEAN

[J 2355/20/1]

No. 38.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 23.)

(No. 179.)

HIS Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Addis Ababa presents his compliments to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of a note from Ras Tafari dated the 28th July respecting raids into Kenya.

Addis Ababa, July 31, 1926.

Enclosure in No. 38.

Ras Tafari to Mr. Maclean.

(After Greetings.)

Addis Ababa, July 28, 1926.

I HAVE seen your letter of the 24th July in which you inform me that you had received a report from the Governor of Kenya that the Aulihan crossed the frontier of Boran over the Dawa River and raided countries and committed murder in Kenya Colony. I may mention that, according to your previous request concerning Fitaaurari Wolde Gabriel and the others, I have arranged that the persons who have already been arrested should be sent up here for trial, and have sent orders to Dejazmach Balcha that the persons who are said to have entered his country should be searched for and sent under arrest. You may have seen the answer of Dejazmach Balcha, in which he says that he is still searching for the men, but that he has not yet got hold of any, and that he is troubled about it as their names are unknown. I have sent a message to him again to search as much as he can. If I hear something new I will let you know at a future date. With regard to the matter in question regarding the Aulihan, I have given orders to Fitaaurari Hapta Giorgis that investigation should be made to find out and arrest the offenders, and also that the particulars of the incident should be sent to us as soon as possible. We shall discuss the question as soon as I receive a report on the subject.

(Seal of Ras Tafari.)

[J 2353/20/1]

No. 39.

Foreign Office to Colonial Office.

Sir

Foreign Office, August 27, 1926.

WITH reference to your letter of the 14th instant regarding Abyssinian raids into North-East Kenya, I am directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to request you to lay before Mr. Secretary Amery the accompanying copy of two further despatches on this subject from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Addis Ababa.*

2. The remoteness of the district from which these raids proceed renders control over the administration by the Central Government almost impossible. Most Abyssinians who accept appointments there do so with the object of enriching themselves in the shortest possible time, and the local administration is consequently even more ineffectual and corrupt than elsewhere in Abyssinia. From Ras Tafari's note of the 28th July it appears that some of the worst officials have been recalled to the capital to answer the charges preferred against them. The temporary cessation of the oppression hitherto exercised by these officials may result in a reduction of raiding by the removal of one of its principal causes, but, unless the recalled officials are promptly replaced by others more capable and less oppressive, an increase of the general anarchy is only to be expected.

In the circumstances, subject to any observations which Mr. Amery may desire to make, Sir Austen Chamberlain proposes to instruct Mr. Maclean by telegraph to maintain strong pressure on the Abyssinian Government to appoint reliable officials in the place of those recalled, and to repeat his demands for the return of the looted stock and for compensation for the murder of the policemen on whatever scale may be decided upon after consultation with the Governor of Kenya.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 2645/20/1]

No. 40.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received September 23.)

Sir,

Downing Street, September 22, 1926.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th August respecting Abyssinian raids into Kenya, and to state that he concurs in the instructions which Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain proposes to send to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Addis Ababa by telegraph.

* Nos. 37 and 38.

2. As regards the amount of compensation to be demanded, Mr. Amery has been in correspondence with the Governor of Kenya, whose recommendations are set out in the schedule enclosed with this letter.

3. I am to add that the Governor of Kenya has asked that the compensation should be paid in money to the Colonial Government, which will expend it in the best interests of the tribe.

I am, &c.
W. C. BOTTOMLEY.

Enclosure in No. 40.

Compensation to the Government of Kenya in respect of a Raid by Abyssinians near Lake Rudolf in 1925.

1. Tribesmen and women killed and wounded :—	Cattle.
8 men killed (compensation, 100 cattle for each man) ...	800
2 women killed (compensation, 50 cattle for each woman) ...	100
2 men wounded (compensation, 20 cattle for each man) ...	40
1 woman wounded (compensation, 10 cattle) ...	10
	950
2. Cattle looted ...	3,090
Total cattle claimed for ...	4,040
	£
Value of 4,040 cattle in shillings (45 per head) ...	9,090
3. Camels looted (550 value) ...	2,200
4. Sheep looted (2,500) and other minor losses ...	1,000
5. Compensation to the Government of Kenya for the death of three policemen ...	1,500
Total compensation ...	13,790

[J 2645/20/1]

No. 41.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Maclean.

(No. 330.)

Sir, Foreign Office, September 29, 1926.
WITH reference to your despatch No. 179 of the 31st July regarding recent raids into the Gurreh district of Kenya, I transmit to you herewith copies of the correspondence on this subject which has passed with the Colonial Office.*

2. I shall be glad if you will present to Ras Taffari the demand for compensation put forward by the Government of Kenya annexed to the Colonial Office letter enclosed herein.† You should request that the money should be paid to you for transmission to the Colonial Government, and explain that it will be expended in the best interests of the victimised tribe. There seems to be no reason why the compensation demanded in respect of the murders and wounding of the civilians and policemen should not be paid at once. Your demands for the return of the looted stock have so far produced no result, and if, as appears probable, the Abyssinian Government are unable to arrange for their restoration in kind, the monetary compensation demanded under this head might be paid at the same time as that for the murders and wounding. But you may explain to the Abyssinian Government that the demand in respect of stock will be reduced *pro tanto* if they can prove that any part thereof has actually been returned.

3. At the same time I would request you to maintain strong pressure on the Abyssinian Government to appoint reliable officials in the place of those recalled.

I am, &c.
AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

* No. 39.

† No. 40.

[J 3087/20/1]

No. 42.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 15.)

(No. 209.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, October 23, 1926.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 330 of the 29th ultimo, I have the honour to report that, as far as I can ascertain, there appears to be a certain confusion as regards the question of raids into Kenya and compensation demanded in respect thereof, in view of the fact that the despatch in question refers to "recent raids into the Gurreh district" (these occurred in 1926), whereas the schedule of compensation refers to "a raid . . . near Lake Rudolf in 1925," Lake Rudolf being several hundred miles away from Gurreh.

2. It may perhaps facilitate dealing with this matter if I specify roughly the various raids under arbitrary names, and report the present position of each :—

(a.) *The "Galabba" Raid.*—This was first reported in Mr. Bentinck's despatch No. 37 of the 17th February, and, as it occurred in September 1925, is, I think, that to which the compensation schedule refers. It was arranged in this case between Mr. Bentinck and Ras Taffari that the affair should be investigated at a spot on the frontier by representatives of the Kenya and Abyssinian Governments, and the last two papers in the files in respect thereto are telegrams from the Governor of Kenya, dated the 17th September and 20th October, reading respectively :—

(1.) "Your telegram, 7th September. Have received your despatch of 26th May. Agree to Gardulla as meeting place, and will telegraph suggested date and place later."

(2.) "My telegram, 17th September. Regret officer acquainted with circumstances of Galabba raid now unavailable. Grateful if you could arrange for Hodson to meet Abyssinian representative for proposed investigation on return from leave."

I would remark here that Ras Taffari has professed himself anxious to settle this matter, but considerable delay seems to have occurred at Nairobi. Further, the suggestion regarding Mr. Hodson is curious, as I am not aware that he is in any way acquainted with the circumstances of the raid, and therefore would have great difficulty in obtaining witnesses and generally conducting the case for Kenya.

(b.) *The "Gurreh" (Boran) Raid.*—This was reported in my despatch No. 155 of the 21st June, and occurred in February 1926. The present position as regards this raid is that Fitaurari Wolde Gabriel and some of the persons accused of being the perpetrators have in the last few days arrived in Addis Ababa to stand an enquiry, while others of the alleged raiders escaped and have not yet been traced. I shall make every effort to expedite this enquiry, and in any event to insist that Fitaurari Wolde Gabriel be not allowed to return to his post.

(c.) *The "Aulihan" Raids.*—These were reported in my despatch No. 177 of the 27th July, and occurred respectively on the 11th, 17th and 31st March of this year. The position in this case is that, in response to my last enquiry, Ras Taffari stated (on the 7th October) that he had ordered Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis to enquire and report on the matter, but that as no reply had up to then been received, he had again written. As it would appear from the map that the Aulihans inhabit Ras Taffari's territory and must have simply crossed through Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis's territory to make the raid, I am addressing a reply to the Ras pointing this out and requesting that he should take steps to enquire into the matter through his own direct feudal subordinates.

3. In view of the foregoing, I feel it essential that the question of compensation should be specified according to the raids with the utmost precision, as it is certain that the Abyssinian Government will be on the alert to seize upon any doubtful point in order to delay a settlement.

4. It is furthermore quite inadvisable, in my opinion, to make any specific demand to the Abyssinian Government for compensation for either the whole or any

part of the wrongs committed before an enquiry has been made and some sort of "judgment" has been given. It must be remembered that the Abyssinians as a race are litigious to the last degree, and there would, I feel sure, be no chance of Ras Tafari accepting the report from a District Commissioner and paying compensation thereon without hearing the statements of his own officials, and the statements of witnesses, and giving a decision upon the whole. In connection with this I may remark that from what Mr. Zaphiro, who has just returned from Harrar, has told me, our hands are weakened seriously by certain recent cases which the Somaliland Government have urged as highly important and deserving of the strongest representations, but which, on investigation, have proved to be, to a considerable extent, without foundation. As soon as Mr. Zaphiro has handed me his official report I propose to deal with this matter in a further despatch.

5. In the meantime, I shall continue to press upon Ras Tafari the point of view that conditions on his frontiers are clearly disgraceful, and that it is incumbent upon him, as a ruler of a country which is a member of a League of civilised nations, to take the most drastic steps to restore order and to punish those responsible for the disorder.

I have, &c.

G. T. MACLEAN.

[J 3087/20/1]

No. 43.

Foreign Office to Colonial Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 22, 1926.

WITH reference to the letter from this Department of the 30th September regarding Abyssinian raids into Kenya, I am directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to request you to lay before Mr. Secretary Amery the accompanying copy of a despatch on this subject from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Addis Ababa.

2. Sir Austen Chamberlain has no doubt that Mr. Amery will agree with Mr. Maclean that, if any satisfaction whatever is to be obtained from the Abyssinian Government, it is important to avoid preferring any claim which lacks a strong foundation, such as that of the Somali deserters, which formed the subject of the letter from this Department of the 18th instant. It is therefore somewhat unfortunate that the claim by the Kenya Government should have been sent to Mr. Maclean as if it related to the Lake Rudolf raid of September 1925, whereas in reality it referred to the Aulihan raids of the 11th-31st March, 1926, details of which were given in your letter of the 14th August and communicated to Ras Tafari in a note dated the 24th July, enclosed in this Department's letter of the 27th August. Moreover, it would seem from a further examination of the claim that the death-roll given therein does not tally either with that communicated to Ras Tafari or with that submitted by the Acting District Commissioner in his letter of the 7th April to the Acting Senior Commissioner of the Northern Frontier Province. In the claim the number of deaths is given as ten, while from the reports it appears to have been eight. I am to suggest that, if the Government of Kenya's claim is to be presented, this discrepancy should first be explained.

3. In paragraph 4 of Mr. Maclean's despatch he points out that the Aulihan raids in question originated from Ras Tafari's own territory and Mr. Maclean is on this account requesting His Highness to make enquiries through his own feudal subordinates. This being so, I am to suggest that, if Mr. Amery still desires the claim of the Government of Kenya to be put forward, this could best be done under cover of a note requesting Ras Tafari to examine it with his responsible feudal subordinate, who should be recalled to the capital for this purpose.

4. As regards the other two groups of raids, designated (a) and (b) in Mr. Maclean's despatch, I am to suggest that the Governor of Kenya may be instructed to make every effort to ensure that his claims and requests may be communicated to His Majesty's representative at Addis Ababa, with the maximum precision permitted by the circumstances, and to state clearly what action he desires His Majesty's consul at Magi to take in the matter of the proposed enquiry at Gardulla.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

No. 44.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 25.)

(No. 150.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, November 26, 1926.

HIS Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires' despatch No. 209, paragraph 2.

In view of new appointment, I assume that Mr. Hodson will now in any case be unavailable.

If Kenya cannot produce officer acquainted with the circumstances, I suggest that Major Miles, now in England, be instructed to come to Addis Ababa on expiration of leave and proceed to the spot in company of Abyssinian officer for joint investigation.

[J 3185/20/1]

No. 45.

Foreign Office to Colonial Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 3, 1926.

WITH reference to my letter of the 22nd November last regarding Abyssinian raids into Kenya, I am directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to observe that as Mr. A. W. Hodson, C.M.G., is shortly proceeding to take up his post as Governor of the Falkland Islands, he will be unable to investigate on behalf of the Kenya Government the circumstances surrounding the "Galabba" raid of September 1925.

2. In these circumstances I am to express the hope that an officer in the service of the Kenya Government who is acquainted with the circumstances of this raid may be nominated to take the place of Mr. Consul Hodson. In paragraph 2 (a) of Mr. Maclean's despatch, forwarded in my letter referred to above, it was stated that the Governor of Kenya had telegraphed, on the 20th October, that the officer acquainted with this raid was not then available, but it is hoped that it will now be possible to make arrangements whereby his services can be obtained.

3. The Secretary of State will await a reply to this letter before communicating again with His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa in regard to the investigation of this raid.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

CHAPTER V.—SLAVERY.

[J 1997/148/1]

No. 46.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 19.)

(No. 564.)

Sir,

Rome, July 13, 1926.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 870 of the 18th ultimo respecting the proposed preliminary conference on Abyssinian slavery, to be held in London, I have the honour to inform you that I took an opportunity a few days ago of again mentioning this matter to the Secretary-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and of pressing for an early decision in the matter.

2. The Ministry have now informed me verbally that it has been decided to permit the Italian Ambassador in London to take part in the discussions, and that the necessary instructions on the subject are being sent to him.

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM.

No. 47.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).

(No. 193.)

[By Bag.]

Foreign Office, July 22, 1926.

(Telegraphic.)

MY despatch No. 1821 of the 23rd ultimo: Slavery in Abyssinia.

Italian Ambassador is being instructed to attend the proposed preliminary discussion in London of the Abyssinian slavery problem.

Lord Cecil can only preside if the meeting is held in his room at 3 P.M. on the 3rd August.

Please urge the French Government to instruct their Ambassador in London, or, if his Excellency is away, the Chargé d'Affaires, to attend at the proposed time, and, if they have not already done so, to furnish him with a statement of their views so as to enable him to take an effective part in the discussion. It is to be hoped that the French Government will allow their representative a considerable measure of discretion as frank and full discussion appears to afford the only chance of finding some solution of a problem, the delicacy and difficulty of which we all fully appreciate.

[J 1989/148/1]

No. 48.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 1021.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 1, 1926.

WITH reference to your Excellency's despatch No. 564 of the 13th instant, I transmit to you herewith copies of a note which I have addressed to the Italian Ambassador in London,* and of a telegram to His Majesty's Ambassador in Paris,† suggesting that the proposed preliminary discussion on Abyssinian slavery shall be held in Lord Cecil's room at 3 P.M. on the 3rd August.

I am, &c.

(For the Secretary of State),

JOHN MURRAY.

* No. 49.

† No. 47.

[J 1989/148/1]

No. 49.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess della Torretta.

Your Excellency,

Foreign Office, July 22, 1926.

HIS Britannic Majesty's Ambassador at Rome has informed me that the Italian Government are sending you the necessary instructions on the subject of the proposed preliminary and unofficial conference in London to discuss the question of slavery in Abyssinia.

2. As I believe your Excellency is aware, Viscount Cecil of Chelwood has consented to preside at this meeting. His Lordship finds to his regret that the only day which he has free for some weeks is the 3rd August, and suggests that the meeting might be held in his room at the Treasury Chambers at 3 P.M. on that afternoon. His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador at Paris has been instructed to ask that the French Ambassador in London may be authorised to attend the meeting. I have the honour to enquire whether your Excellency will find the proposed date and time convenient.

I have, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 2178/148/1]

No. 50.

Record of Meeting with French and Italian Ambassadors to discuss Slavery in Abyssinia.

A MEETING, presided over by Lord Cecil, was held in the Ambassadors' Waiting Room on the afternoon of the 3rd August to discuss the problem of slavery in Abyssinia, at which the French and Italian Ambassadors, Mr. Murray, Consul Hodson, Mr. Cavendish-Bentinck and Mr. Ronald were present.

Lord Cecil laid stress on the informal character of the meeting and explained that it had been convened in order that the three interested Powers, who obviously must act together in a matter of this sort, might explore the possibilities of assisting Abyssinia to fulfil the undertakings given by her on admission to the League of Nations. The question was one of extreme delicacy, and great care must be taken to avoid wounding the susceptibilities of the Abyssinian Government, whose willing collaboration was essential if any scheme was to be successful. It had been suggested that the League might appoint a commissioner to reside in Abyssinia and report on conditions to the Secretary-General and make recommendations regarding the assistance Abyssinia required in abolishing slavery. Alternatively, the League might support some such Abyssinian institution as Dr. Martin's projected school for emancipated slaves. Experience had shown that the only way to put down the slave trade was to abolish slavery; this could only be effected gradually by educating public opinion and by legislation. Domestic slavery had existed in Abyssinia from time immemorial and could only be suppressed by degrees. There were two sources of supply—slave raids and children born into slavery. The former was drying up as a result of the exhaustion of the field of supply; the latter could only be affected by the change in public opinion and by the successful working of institutions such as that projected by Dr. Martin. Lord Cecil asked what were the views of the French and Italian Governments.

The Italian Ambassador said that his Government were naturally interested in the problem of Abyssinian slavery, but they felt that it required extremely careful handling. For himself, His Excellency thought that the present moment was ill-suited for a move in the matter by any of the three Powers represented at the meeting, seeing that Abyssinia appeared to be going through a phase of xenophobia.

The French Ambassador said that his Government were equally interested in the problem and agreed as to the necessity for extreme circumspection. His Excellency was not convinced that any immediate action by the three Powers was called for, and submitted that slavery conditions in Abyssinia were no worse than in China and Japan, where millions, though not called slaves, suffered quite as much as domestic serfs in Abyssinia.

Consul Hodson gave details of depopulation and atrocities committed by slave raiders in South-Western Abyssinia, through most of which he personally had

[15702]

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travelled. He added that it was grossly misleading to suggest that slaves were generally well treated.

Mr. Murray explained that His Majesty's Government were anxious to take immediate action of some sort for a variety of reasons. *Inter alia* the United States were believed to be about to send a representative to Abyssinia; it was only to be expected that he would draw the attention of his Government to slavery conditions in that country, and it would then become only too apparent that Abyssinia had not fulfilled the undertakings given by her on admission to the League. If in the meanwhile the Council of the League had done nothing it would be difficult to avoid the charge of having deliberately shut their eyes to a scandal which they were pledged to combat. Slavery would be very much in the air next month during the discussion of the Geneva Slavery Protocol. The Council might then vote some substantial gift, say £5,000, towards supporting Dr. Martin's school, and Mr. Murray believed that such action would not only be warmly approved by the Assembly but could not possibly wound Abyssinian feelings. Having thus given practical proof of their interest and goodwill, the Council would be in a much stronger position at some later date to take more effective measures in connection with the problem of Abyssinian slavery.

The French Ambassador said that he knew Dr. Martin by repute, but he was quite unable to agree then and there to recommend his Government to support Mr. Murray's proposal. On the other hand, he was prepared to put the point to his Government who could make their own enquiries, and from their result decide whether Dr. Martin's project deserved their support. The Italian Ambassador said he also would put the suggestion to his Government in the same way. Mr. Murray promised to send their Excellencies copies of the appeal for funds issued by Dr. Martin.

Lord Cecil suggested that the League, when the Slavery Protocol had been discussed, might write to the Abyssinian Government and, referring to the undertakings given by her on admission, ask what aid from the League she felt she needed in order to deal with the problem of slavery in her territory. His Lordship remarked that for the moment Italy and Great Britain could obviously not themselves raise the question either in the Council or in the Assembly for fear that this might excite the suspicion that they intended to use slavery as a lever to obtain the concessions referred to in the recent Anglo-Italian Agreement. France would also probably be loath to take the initiative, and he therefore felt that none of the three Governments represented at the meeting could do much for the moment. He would, however, be glad if their Excellencies would report these informal proceedings to their Governments and invite their observations on the three suggestions:—

1. A League Resident Commissioner.
2. Support for Dr. Martin's projected school.
3. The letter from the League asking Abyssinia what help she required to suppress slavery in her territory.

The Ambassadors promised to do this, and the meeting adjourned at 4 P.M.

[J 2263/148/1]

No. 51.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 16.)

(No. 174.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, July 25, 1926.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 173 of the 22nd instant,* regarding the question of slavery in Abyssinia, certain hints which have reached me within the last few days have given me cause to wonder whether a definite attempt is not being made by the Abyssinians to put their house at least outwardly in order before the next meeting of the League of Nations.

2. As I remarked in my despatch under reference, the articles in "Light and Peace" seem to have had a certain effect. Further, Count Colli gave me to understand that Ras Kassa was now at variance with Ras Tafari and the Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis, principally on the question of slavery, thereby implying that the two latter

* Not printed.

were tending to a more reasonable point of view. A third hint was conveyed to me in connection with a case in the Mixed Court. An Abyssinian woman sued a British Arab for the return to her of the Arab's wife, whom she alleged to be her slave. I protested against the hearing of such a case, on the grounds not only that the wife of a British subject could not be a slave, but also on the ground that the Mixed Court could not recognise slavery as a cause of action. The judge said he would reserve his decision on the point, and after about a week's delay told me to-day that he agreed with my point of view, that slavery was illegal and that the Empress and Ras Tafari were about to liberate all their slaves.

3. At the moment I am not in a position to do more than report the impression which these various hints have made upon me, an impression which is certainly that a movement of some sort is on foot, and which I communicate to you for what it may be worth.

I have, &c.

G. T. MACLEAN.

No. 52.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Maclean (Addis Ababa).

(No. 90.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, August 20, 1926.

MY despatch No. 266 of 26th July: Slavery in Abyssinia.

French and Italian Ambassadors attended meeting presided over by Lord Cecil on 3rd August. Proceedings were informal and confidential, but Ambassadors agreed to invite views of their Governments on following three tentative suggestions:—

1. Appointment by the League of resident slavery commissioner;
2. Financial support by League for Dr. Martin's school and other similar local institutions; and
3. Communication from the League asking Abyssinia, on conclusion of discussions of new Slavery Convention, what help she required to suppress slavery.

All agreed that none of the Powers represented could too obviously interest itself in the Abyssinian slavery problem at present in view of almost inevitable misconstruction to which such initiative would be exposed.

Record follows by bag.

[J 2178/148/1]

No. 53.

*Sir Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).**

(No. 2396.)

My Lord Marquess,

Foreign Office, August 21, 1926.

I TRANSMIT to you herewith a record of the proceedings at the informal meeting held on the 3rd instant to discuss the question of slavery in Abyssinia.† Copies of this record have been communicated to the French and Italian Ambassadors, neither of whom wishes to make any alterations or additions.

2. I shall be glad if your Lordship will take every opportunity of impressing on the French Government that His Majesty's Government continue to watch the problem of Abyssinian slavery with the closest interest, and are anxious to learn as soon as possible their views on the tentative suggestions put forward at the recent meeting.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

* Also to Mr. Wingfield, Rome, No. 1163, *mutatis mutandis*.

No. 54.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Maclean (Addis Ababa).

(No. 92.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, August 24, 1926.

SUGGESTIONS contained in my telegram No. 90 of 20th August are in the nature of alternatives, but are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

[J 2606/148/1]

No. 55.

Mr. Wingfield to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 20.)

(No. 777. Confidential.)

Sir,

Rome, September 14, 1926.

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your despatch No. 1163 of the 21st ultimo, I have asked Signor Guariglia, head of the Department for North Africa and the Near East of the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, when His Majesty's Government might hope to be placed in possession of the views of the Italian Government on the tentative suggestions respecting the problem of slavery in Abyssinia put forward at the meeting presided over by Lord Cecil on the 3rd ultimo.

2. Signor Guariglia seemed surprised that any further expressions of the Italian views should be expected, since he was under the impression that the Italian Ambassador had voiced them on that occasion, namely, that the present moment was not a propitious one for taking any steps towards exercising pressure on Abyssinia in this matter. He promised, however, that he would suggest to Signor Mussolini that instructions should be sent to the Italian Ambassador in London to enable him to express verbally the considered views of the Italian Government on the three suggestions put forward.

3. Signor Guariglia said that the Italian Government were opposed to the idea of suggesting the appointment of a resident League Commissioner; whilst, with regard to Dr. Martin's school, he remarked that there was an Italian who desired to start a similar school. On the third point he expressed no opinion; but he gave me the impression that the Italian Government regarded this question of slavery as a useful stick where-with to threaten the Abyssinians, if they proved recalcitrant with regard to other matters of interest to Italy, but which was not to be used so long as the Ethiopian Government showed themselves amenable in other directions.

4. I did not fail to point out that His Majesty's Government, though conscious that slavery could not be abolished immediately in Abyssinia, and that any strong action to that end at the present moment might lend itself to misconstruction, were nevertheless deeply interested in the question itself and most anxious that there should be steady and continuous, if necessarily slow, progress towards that complete abolition in Abyssinia of slavery, the existence of which they and other members of the Council of the League of Nations were pledged to combat.

I have, &c.

CHARLES WINGFIELD.

[J 2697/148/1]

No. 56.

Mr. Phipps to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 29.)

(No. 1807.)

Sir,

Paris, September 28, 1926.

WITH a view to carrying out the instructions contained in your despatch No. 2396 of the 21st ultimo, I spoke to M. Corbin, in M. Berthelot's absence, on the 9th instant and begged him to supply the Embassy with the views of the French Government on the suggestions put forward at the meeting on the 3rd ultimo regarding the question of slavery in Abyssinia. M. Corbin promised to send a reply at an early date, but none having been received from that strangely unhelpful official I decided to speak to M. Berthelot himself to-day on the subject. I pointed out how anxious His Majesty's

Government were that this question should not be lost sight of, and that some progress should be made towards the complete abolition of slavery in Abyssinia.

2. M. Berthelot was not *au courant* of the question, but promised to furnish the views of the French Government in the matter as soon as possible.

I have, &c.

ERIC PHIPPS.

[J 2698/148/1]

No. 57.

Mr. Ronald to M. Rosso.

My dear Rosso,

Foreign Office, September 29, 1926.

I AM not sure that I grasped all the points in the verbal communication you were good enough to make to me some days ago regarding the views of your Government on the suggestions put forward at the meeting held on the 3rd August to discuss the problem of slavery in Abyssinia.

As I told you, the discussions at Geneva concerning slavery in general have now terminated without any consideration having been given to the particular case of Abyssinia. There is therefore no longer any urgency for us to make up our minds what attitude to adopt, as the opportunity for the expression of our views has temporarily been lost. Probably this is just as well in view of the delicacy of our relations with Abyssinia since the publication of the recent Anglo-Italian Agreement.

But, I submit, it will be well for us to make provision for the future by deciding now what policy we are going to adopt generally in the matter of Abyssinian slavery. This being so, I am anxious to be sure that I have rightly interpreted the views of your Government and write now to ask you to put me right if I am wrong.

I gather that your Government, generally speaking, would be opposed to any form of pressure in getting Abyssinia to accept a resident League commissioner, as being derogatory to her sovereign rights. If, however, Abyssinia could be induced herself to invite the League to appoint a commissioner to assist her in the abolition of slavery, I take it that your Government would see no objection. But would your Government be prepared, if opportunity offered, to join France and Great Britain in suggesting to Abyssinia that she should invite the League to appoint a resident commissioner?

As regards Dr. Martin's school, I understood you to say that your Government, while in principle prepared to offer such assistance as lay in their power to institutions of the type in question, feel bound to enter express reserves in the case of Dr. Martin's school, as they have not the necessary confidence in the man himself. Moreover, they incline to think that any resources they may have available should be devoted in the first place to assisting the already existing school run by Italian missionaries for the same objects as those which Dr. Martin has in mind.

As to the remaining suggestion put forward at the meeting, your Government say they see no objection to Abyssinia corresponding with the Secretary-General in the matter of the fulfilment of the promises she made on admission to the League. But, as I understood Lord Cecil's suggestion, it was to the effect, not that Abyssinia should put herself in touch with the League, but that the League should put themselves in touch with Abyssinia, asking her what aid she felt she needed in order to deal with the problem of slavery in her territory. I would therefore ask whether your Government would welcome an enquiry to this effect from the League, prompted by some one other than an Italian, French or British delegate at some appropriate moment.

Finally, your Government are of opinion that it is not possible to confine the question of slavery in a watertight compartment; extraneous considerations, such as Abyssinia's behaviour in the matter of the recent agreement, must be borne in mind and allowed to react on our choice of opportunities to come out into the open with public expressions of our views on the subject of Abyssinian slavery. This, I think, is roughly in harmony with the views expressed by Lord Cecil at the meeting, but, in order to obviate the possibility of giving anybody the flimsiest excuse for accusing us of anything in the nature of blackmail, I submit that we should be extremely careful only to allow outside factors to influence our choice of opportunities to publish our views and not to allow them to colour our views themselves or our policy towards slavery in general.

When you reply I would suggest, if you agree, that we should inform the French Government of your views and invite their observations. When we get their answer

we will inform our Ambassadors at Rome and Paris of the views which appear to commend themselves to all three parties and instruct them to make the necessary communication to the Governments to which they are respectively accredited and to invite them to send instructions in the appropriate sense to their representatives at Addis Ababa.

Yours sincerely,
NIGEL RONALD.

[J 2700/148/1]

No. 58.

Mr. Phipps to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 30.)

(No. 1821.)

Sir,

Paris, September 29, 1926.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 1807 of yesterday's date respecting the question of slavery in Abyssinia, I have the honour to inform you that M. Berthelot has sent me a message to the effect that the French Government would prefer the third solution suggested in the enclosure to your despatch No. 2396 of the 21st ultimo, viz., that a communication should be addressed to the Abyssinian Government by the League of Nations asking Abyssinia what help she requires to suppress slavery in her territory.

I have, &c.
ERIC PHIPPS.

[J 2773/148/1]

No. 59.

Memorandum communicated by M. de Fleuriau on October 4.

LE procès-verbal de la réunion officieuse qui s'est tenue le 3 août dernier, au Foreign Office, entre Lord Cecil et les Ambassadeurs de France et d'Italie, au sujet de la question de l'esclavage en Abyssinie se termine par une requête de Lord Cecil tendant à provoquer les observations des trois Gouvernements intéressés sur les trois suggestions suivantes :

1. Question du Commissaire-Résident de la Société des Nations en Abyssinie ;
2. Appui éventuel à donner à l'école du Dr. Martin ;
3. Lettre de la Société des Nations demandant à l'Abyssinie de quel concours elle aurait besoin pour supprimer l'esclavage sur son territoire.

Sur le premier point M. Briand estime qu'il n'y a pas lieu de retenir la proposition tendant à l'envoi d'un délégué de la Société des Nations en Abyssinie. Sir F. Lugard, délégué britannique à la Commission temporaire de l'Esclavage (15-25 juillet 1925), avait déjà proposé à cette époque l'envoi en Abyssinie d'une commission composée des représentants de deux ou trois Etats membres de la Société des Nations et qui aurait eu pour mission d'éclairer le Conseil de la Ligue sur la question de l'esclavage en Abyssinie, afin d'aider le Gouvernement d'Abbas-Abbaba à exécuter les engagements pris par lui vis-à-vis de la Société des Nations. Le Commission temporaire de l'Esclavage n'a pas retenu, à l'époque, la proposition de Sir F. Lugard.

Il n'est pas non plus partisan, en principe, d'engager le Conseil de la Société des Nations à voter une subvention de l'ordre de £5,000 à l'école des esclaves fondée à Addis-Abbaba, sous le patronage du Ras Taffari, par le Dr. Martin ; on ne dispose pas à Paris de renseignements précis, soit sur la personnalité du Dr. Martin, soit sur le rendement pratique éventuel de l'institution qu'il dirige, tant en ce qui touche la répression de l'esclavage que l'amélioration du sort des esclaves libérés.

Il paraîtrait désirable, dans l'éventualité où une subvention serait accordée par la Société des Nations, à l'école du Dr. Martin, que cette subvention fût accordée sur la suggestion du Prince Héritier d'Abyssinie ou des délégués de ce pays à Genève, afin de ne pas éveiller les susceptibilités abyssines.

M. Briand ne verrait pas d'inconvénient à ce que le Conseil de la Société des Nations fit savoir au Gouvernement abyssin qu'il est à sa disposition, dans la mesure

et sous la forme qui agréeraient à celui-ci, pour lui prêter le concours de la Ligue dans la tâche qu'il poursuit afin d'aboutir à la suppression de l'esclavage.

Si le Gouvernement abyssin, comme il y a lieu de le prévoir, acceptait une proposition de la Société des Nations, présentée sous cette forme, il se pourrait qu'il indiquât, de lui-même, l'opportunité d'une subvention à l'école du Dr. Martin.

Ambassade de France, Londres,
le 30 septembre 1926.

[J 2601/148/1]

No. 60.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Maclean (Addis Ababa)

(No. 337.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 30, 1926.

YOU will remember that, in the memorandum forwarded under cover of Mr. Bentinck's confidential despatch No. 91 of the 26th April, Mr. Zaphiro drew attention to the continuance of the slave traffic through Tajura.

2. According to the enclosed extract from a report by the Senior Naval Officer, Red Sea sloops, an incident of some importance in connection with this traffic seems to have occurred during last December. The slave "kafila" in question is reported to have started from Alio (or Aliyo) a hill or mountain in the Danakil country some three days' march from the Nasuch River. Its capture was reported to the British-Somaliland police sergeant at Sasman who visited the scene of the capture on the 5th January, that is one month after its occurrence.

3. The enclosed extract from "Aden Monthly News Letter" to the Colonial Office, dated the 31st August, 1926, gives further particulars of comparatively recent date regarding the traffic through Tajura, and I have been led to consider whether representations should not once more be made to the French Government. But, before issuing any instructions to His Majesty's Ambassador in Paris, I shall be glad to learn whether the replacement of M. Chapon-Brissac by M. Tellier as Governor of Jibuti has resulted in any marked diminution in the volume of the traffic.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

Enclosure 1 in No. 60.

Extract from reports of proceedings of H.M.S. "Clematis" in the Red Sea during the period April 15—June 30, 1926 (forwarded by the Admiralty, September 15).

33. Early in December, a big slave caravan financed by Abobokr Pasha and led by his kinsman Buleh Bobokr was attacked near Hanoweh, some ten days march from Tajourah, its destination, by the Black Aysa tribe. All males were killed, including Buleh Bobokr, and the women were sent back to Abyssinia.

Some idea of the size of the caravan can be gathered from the fact that the Aysa captured seventy-five rifles on this occasion.

34. Major Rayne considers this information reliable, as he has it from various sources, and it is confirmed by his police sergeant, who was on the spot shortly afterwards.

35. Major Rayne and I conversed with several local chiefs as well as with his police non-commissioned officers.

36. One old chief who is living in well-to-do retirement at Zeila was very communicative and gave a minute account of the whole progress of a slave caravan, from the start to the sale in Arabia.

37. An enquiry from me as to how he came by his knowledge would have been tactless and might have stemmed the flow of information.

38. I gathered that the existence of the trade is common knowledge and that it has its regular servants, such as the promoters who put up the money, brokers and caravan leaders, who are all well known.

The chief promoters are the family of Abobokr Pasha, who lives in Abyssinia and was at one time Egyptian Governor of Jibouti.

39. It appears that French control is confined to the town of Jibouti and to a much less extent to the railway.

They have no control or knowledge of what goes on on the north shore of the gulf.

40. There are a few native police in Tajourah who dare not say or do anything.

41. All evidence agreed that the trade goes on from October till April, when the wind is south in the Straits of Perim. The route is as follows:—

Caravans are embarked in dhows at Tajourah and Obokh. The dhows then coast to near Siyan opposite Perim and wait for dark.

42. They cross the straits in a few hours and make the land to the southward of Hodeida. The village of Khokha, fifteen miles north of Mocha was also named.

43. From there to the northward dhows only travel by night and the slaves are landed and sent inland during the day. They are delivered according to local needs at Midi, Gizan, Birk or Kunfida.

44. As the weather in the Straits of Perim in winter is usually unsuitable for boarding and as sloops can only move in the reefs by day, the prospects of capturing slave dhows are not bright.

Only the French can stop the trade and they appear to do nothing, and it is only when some accident like the Aysa raid, quoted above, happens that we ever hear of it.

45. It is worth noting that I got more information during my visit to Zeila than I have heard in the last eighteen months, and I would suggest that that port be visited occasionally by Red Sea sloops, taking care to do so while the district commissioner is there.

[E 5348/97/91]

Enclosure 2 in No. 60.

Extract from "Aden News Letter" of August 31.

128. According to information received from Hassan Kanjooni, political clerk at Hodeidah, slave trade at Medi has increased of late. A consignment of twenty-seven slaves arrived at Medi by dhow from Tajourah in the middle of June and the slaves were landed and sold in the open market. Further consignments are expected to arrive at Medi shortly from Tajourah. The names of the slave-dealers are given as Abdul Kadir Makki and Bashir Mohamed, both Bankalis living at Tajourah. It is said that the Imam's Amil at Medi, who himself bought some of the slaves, is encouraging the trade. This Amil is Kadi Abdulla-al-Arashi, who was for some time the Imam's envoy at Aden.

[J 2773/148/1]

No. 61.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 1420.)
Sir,

Foreign Office, October 19, 1926.

WITH reference to Mr. Wingfield's despatch No. 777 of the 14th ultimo recording a conversation with M. Guariglia on the subject of slavery in Abyssinia, I transmit to your Excellency the accompanying copy* of a communication received from the French Ambassador defining the attitude of the French Government towards the three tentative suggestions put forward by Lord Cecil at the informal meeting with M. de Fleuriau and the Marquess della Torretta on the 3rd August last.

2. From the observations let fall by M. Guariglia during his interview with Mr. Wingfield, and subsequently by M. Rosso in conversation with a member of this department (*cf.* my despatch No. 1324 of the 30th ultimo), I imagine that the French proposal is likely to prove acceptable to the Italian Government. On this assumption, the suggested communication to the Abyssinian Government would presumably be made by Sir Eric Drummond on the instructions of the Council of the League of Nations, and so must await the next meeting of that body. I shall be glad if you will ascertain whether the Italian Government concur in the French proposal described in the penultimate paragraph of the enclosure to this despatch, and, if so, whether they will instruct their representative on the Council of the League

* No. 59

to concert with his British and French colleagues at the next meeting with a view to getting the proposal adopted by the Council.

3. A copy of this despatch is being sent to His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris with instructions to acquaint the French Government with the action taken and invite their concurrence.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 2773/148/1]

No. 62.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).

(No. 2946.)

Foreign Office, October 19, 1926.

My Lord Marquess,

WITH reference to Mr. Phipps's despatch No. 1821 of the 29th ultimo, I transmit to your Lordship the accompanying copy of a despatch* to Sir R. Graham enclosing a memorandum† in which the French Ambassador has defined in rather greater detail than did M. Berthelot the attitude of his Government towards the three tentative proposals advanced by Lord Cecil at the meeting with M. de Fleuriau and the Marquis della Torretta on the 3rd August last to consider the problem of slavery in Abyssinia.

2. I request that you will take an opportunity of acquainting the French Government with the tenor of the instructions addressed to Sir R. Graham and will invite their concurrence in the procedure therein suggested.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 2899/148/1]

No. 63.

The Marquess of Crewe to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 23.)

(No. 1970.)

HIS Majesty's representative at Paris presents his compliments to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of a note to M. Briand, dated the 22nd October, 1926, respecting slavery in Abyssinia.

Paris, October 22, 1926.

Enclosure in No. 63.

The Marquess of Crewe to M. Briand.

October 22, 1926.

M. le Ministre,

ON the 4th October his Excellency the French Ambassador in London was so good as to communicate to the Foreign Office a memorandum explaining the views of the Government of the Republic regarding the three tentative suggestions put forward by Lord Cecil at the informal meeting which he had on the 3rd August last with M. de Fleuriau and the Italian Ambassador in London concerning the question of slavery in Abyssinia.

2. In this memorandum it was explained that the Government of the Republic saw no objection to the suggestion that the Council of the League of Nations should inform the Abyssinian Government that it was prepared to lend, in such a manner as would meet with Abyssinian approval, the support of the League to assist the Abyssinian Government in its task of suppressing slavery.

3. From the information at his disposal, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs feels that the proposal of the Government of the Republic mentioned above is likely to prove acceptable to the Italian Government. Should this assumption prove correct, the suggested communication to the Abyssinian Government would presumably be made by the Secretary-General of the League of

* No. 61.

† No. 59.

[15702]

E

Nations acting on the instructions of the Council, and would, therefore, have to await the next meeting of that latter body. His Majesty's Ambassador in Rome has been instructed to ascertain whether in fact the Italian Government are prepared to concur in the proposal made in M. de Fleuriau's memorandum and, if so, whether they would be willing to instruct their representative on the Council of the League to concert with his French and British colleagues at the next meeting with a view to securing the adoption of the proposal by the Council.

4. In acquainting your Excellency with the instructions which have been addressed to Sir R. Graham, I am directed to express the hope that the Government of the Republic will be prepared to concur in the procedure therein suggested.

I have, &c.

CREWE.

[J 2759/148/1]

No. 64.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).

(No. 3049.)

My Lord Marquess,

Foreign Office, October 29, 1926.

WITH reference to the semi-official correspondence regarding the slave trade through Tajura ending with Chancery letter of the 4th instant, I have to inform your Lordship that, after reconsidering the matter, I have come to the conclusion that it will be better if representations are made at once to the French Government without awaiting a reply to my despatch to Addis Ababa of the 30th September.

2. I shall be glad, therefore, if you will address a note to the French Government informing them of the incidents reported by the senior naval officer of the Red Sea patrol, and urging them to take more energetic measures to exercise proper control in Jibuti.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3107/148/1]

No. 65.

Note communicated by M. Rosso on November 17, 1926.

ON September last I had a long talk with Ronald on the subject of "Slavery in Abyssinia." On that occasion I gave the views of the Italian Government concerning the suggestions which had been put forward at the meeting held on the 3rd August to discuss the problem.

After our conversation, Ronald was good enough to write to me (the 29th September) summing up the whole question, and submitting certain points on which he suggested that the Italian Government should give their definite views, in order to find out a common line the two Governments could possibly agree to follow in dealing with the subject.

Having communicated the above to our Ministry for Foreign Affairs, we have now received their answer, which I am going to communicate to you.

In the first place, you wanted to know whether the Italian Government would see any objection to the appointment of a Resident League Commissioner in Addis Ababa in case Abyssinia could be induced herself to invite the League to appoint such a commissioner to assist her in the abolition of slavery. You wanted also to know whether the Italian Government were prepared, if opportunity offered, to join France and Great Britain in suggesting to Abyssinia that she should invite the League to appoint a Resident Commissioner.

On these two questions our Government, taking advantage of the friendly spirit of collaboration which has in the last time inspired the policy of our two countries in Abyssinia, want to express their views with the utmost frankness, and those views are quite decidedly against the idea of a resident League commissioner in Abyssinia. Our opposition is not only justified by the preoccupation of hurting the susceptibilities of the Ethiopian Government. Another and most essential reason is that we see the danger that the representative of the League of Nations, who should be officially appointed as a Resident Commissioner in Addis Ababa, might give rise to political interferences. We can hardly believe that the action of such an agent

would be strictly confined to the question of slavery. Very likely the representative of the League of Nations could not avoid being subject to political influences from one or other Power, and the dangers of such a situation are obvious.

We are firmly convinced that the hypothetical advantages which could derive from the establishment in Addis Ababa of a resident representative of the League of Nations would surely be overshadowed by the inconveniences.

For those reasons we want you to know that we do not see our way to join in your suggestion, that is, to suggest to the Abyssinian Government to apply to the League of Nations for the sending of a representative of the League to Addis Ababa. We would oppose any suggestion of the kind even if the League representative could be an Italian. My Government therefore beg you very warmly not to insist on such a suggestion.

On the other side, we do not see any objection that a member of the League of Nations (other than British, French or Italian) should take the initiative of proposing to the secretariat in Geneva to write to the Abyssinian Government asking what aid from the League they felt they needed in order to deal with the problem of slavery. No objection from us in this respect, provided, of course, that such an initiative would not ultimately resolve in the first solution, that is, the one of the Resident League Commissioner, which we cannot agree with.

[J 3172/148/1]

No. 66.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 26.)

(No. 214.)

Addis Ababa, November 1, 1926.

Sir,

WITH reference to your despatch No. 337 of the 30th September relative to the question of slave traffic through Tajura, I have the honour to refer to my despatch No. 211 of the 26th ultimo, which, although dealing principally with the traffic in dangerous drugs, referred also to the traffic in slaves.

2. Owing to the absence of any consular officer at Jibuti, it is a matter of some difficulty to form any sort of accurate estimate as to the effect, if any, as regards this traffic, caused by the change of Governors, but the information which I have received certainly goes to show that, whether or no the new Governor is making any efforts to stop it, the slave traffic continues without apparent hindrance. I am in fact informed that, since of late commerce in general has been undergoing a "slump," more persons have been turning their attention to the slave trade, which has been "booming" in consequence.

3. My impression, from the information at my command, is that, without a doubt, Tajura is the weak spot in any system of control. From lack of funds, it appears, the French Somaliland Government is not in a position to establish a proper post there, and under the almost entire absence of European control, it has become the chief collecting and distributing centre for the slave traffic across the Red Sea. It may be said, of course, that if driven out of Tajura the slave traders would soon find another spot on the inhospitable coast of French Somaliland, but that is in itself no reason to allow the Tajura slave market to continue there undisturbed.

4. There is some ground for believing, but of course no proof, that the notorious de Montfried is the organising brain and principal gainer of the traffic in this neighbourhood, and it is by no means outside the bounds of possibility that his influence over officials at Jibuti (to which reference was made in my above-mentioned despatch) may be one of the reasons for the lack of efficient control on the northern shore of the Gulf of Obok.

I have, &c.

G. T. MACLEAN.

No. 67.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(Nos. 109 and 110.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, December 2, 1926.

(R.) FOLLOWING question was asked in the House of Commons to-day:—

"Whether His Majesty's Government have any information showing whether the League of Nations is satisfied that the Abyssinian Government are fulfilling their undertaking on joining the League to endeavour to secure the complete suppression of slavery in Abyssinia; and, if the League is not satisfied, whether His Majesty's Government propose to institute an independent enquiry into the matter?"

The reply was as follows:—

"So far as I am aware, no steps have yet been taken by the League to verify Abyssinian compliance with the terms of their undertaking. While His Majesty's Government cannot intervene in the internal affairs of a State which is a fellow member, the League can rely upon their warm support in any action it may decide to take to assist the Abyssinian Government to fulfil its pledges."

(End of R.)

(Confidential.)

It is reported that the "Daily Express" intends to start a campaign against His Majesty's Government for their supine attitude towards slavery in Abyssinia. Above question and reply will help to forestall this attack.

[J 3269/148/1]

No. 68.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 405.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 10, 1926.

YOU will recollect that in August last Lord Cecil presided over a meeting attended by the French and Italian Ambassadors to consider the subject of slavery in Abyssinia. This meeting and much subsequent correspondence has shown that the French and Italian Governments, while rejecting the other proposals then put forward, see no objection to the Secretary-General of the League asking the Abyssinian Government whether there is any way in which the League can assist them in discharging their obligations in regard to the suppression of slavery. The Italian Government, however, have qualified their assent by making it clear that in no circumstances would they agree to a Resident Commissioner to be appointed by the League to reside in Abyssinia and if this seemed likely to be the outcome of the suggested communication from Sir E. Drummond they would have to withdraw their support from the proposal which they would otherwise endorse provided that it emanated from some "neutral" member of the Council and not from any one of the three great Powers chiefly concerned.

2. The motives of the French and Italian Governments are readily comprehensible; they have no desire to burn their fingers in connection with a purely altruistic cause, and, if something must be done, they would prefer that His Majesty's Government should do it and incur any unpopularity consequent upon what might be made to appear a provocative gesture. His Majesty's Government have no desire gratuitously to court unpopularity in a matter in which they can count on only very half-hearted support and in which it is much easier to injure the prospects of the Tsana negotiations than to help the slaves. Nor would it be either dignified or effective to call upon the representative of some "neutral" Power to relieve them of an inconvenient and embarrassing initiative.

3. In these circumstances I have authorised Lord Cecil to discuss the problem very confidentially with reliable members of the League secretariat and to explain to them that our only anxiety in the matter is to see that the League does not incur

discredit by failing to interest itself in the discharge of the very definite obligations which it had imposed on Abyssinia only three years ago. Lord Cecil thinks that he can do this without any public attention being drawn to the subject, and that the secretariat may be able to suggest a way out of the difficulty. It is, in any case, unlikely that any decisive action will be taken during the present session of the Council.

4. I will inform you in due course whether Lord Cecil has found it possible to take any action while in Geneva. Meanwhile, I would warn you that the next meeting of the Council in March may decide to instruct the Secretary-General to address the proposed letter to the Abyssinian Government.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3445/148/1]

No. 69.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 31.)

(No. 223.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, November 26, 1926.

IN the course of a conversation to-day, my Italian colleague asked me what was being done about the question of slavery in Abyssinia. I told him of the suggestion contained in Lord Crewe's note to M. Briand of the 22nd October (Paris despatch No. 1970) which I understood was likely to prove acceptable both to the Italian and French Governments. Count Colli and I agreed that by far the best course would be the one now proposed, and for the Secretary-General of the League of Nations to write direct to Ras Tafari on the subject. As the League of Nations had already enquired of the Governor of the Sudan as to the steps being taken to put down slavery there, I did not see how Ras Tafari could consider such a step injurious to the sovereignty of an independent State. Count Colli did not think, however, such a letter would have the slightest effect, for, he said, slavery was far too deeply engrained into the native mentality. I expressed the hope that if Ras Tafari were able to show to the Empress a letter from the Secretary-General of the League of Nations this might strengthen his hands, for we are both convinced that his Highness is sincerely desirous of suppressing the evil as far as possible. It is, however, strange that his Highness has not yet seen his way to act on Count Colli's suggestion to set a good example by releasing the slaves in his own household.

2. Count Colli went on to say that there were twelve Roman Catholic missions in the south-west in the Kaffa and Maji districts. According to the reports of the missionaries, slavery was worse than ever, and the slaves were now subjected to far worse treatment than previously both in Ras Kabada and Dejazmatch Balcha's countries. Since the appointment of the former, who has, I understand, not yet visited his new province, conditions had by no means improved (see my despatch No. 107 of the 7th May last). People were being made slaves in all directions, and the dwellings of the missionaries had even been entered and their pupils enslaved.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

CHAPTER VI.—LAKE TSANA.

No. 70.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 1.)(No. 156.)
(Telegraphic.)

Rome, June 30, 1926.

MY telegram No. 152.

I spoke again to Prime Minister and [? Signor Grandi] this morning. The former complained that French attitude remained unreasonable and unfriendly. The latter declared that nothing had yet been received regarding French objections from Italian Embassy in Paris which [group omitted] totally unable to extract them from draft note; he had asked French Embassy here for enlightenment but they had no information. He had telegraphed again to Italian Embassy in Paris to the effect that if the French official objections were those enumerated in French press, Italian Government would have no difficulty in answering them, but Ministry must first be furnished with definite statement on the subject. He added that Count Colli reported that Abyssinian attitude towards our agreement, which had at first been fairly friendly, was now much less favourable owing to advice tendered to Abyssinians by French Minister.

[J 1792/19/1]

No. 71.

Mr. Phipps to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 1.)(No. 259.)
(Telegraphic.)

[By Bag.]

Paris, June 30, 1926.

ROME telegram No. 152.

2. Please see my despatch No. 120 of 28th June copied to Rome by last evening's messenger.

3. In circumstances outlined therein, I doubt for the moment whether any useful purpose would be served by, and whether it would be wise to initiate, further conversations with Italian Embassy in Paris on this subject.

(Repeated to Rome, No. 7, in cypher.)

[J 1812/19/1]

No. 72.

*Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 2.)**(No. 105.)
(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, June 21, 1926.

YOUR telegram No. 70.

It now appears doubtful whether Abyssinian Government intends to submit matter to League of Nations (see my despatch No. 154 of 19th June).

[J 1817/1817/1]

No. 73.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 2.)(No. 107.)
(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, June 28, 1926.

SERIOUS situation has arisen here between Italian Minister and Ras Tafari. Two further articles of extremely anti-Italian tendency have appeared in consecutive numbers of "Light and Peace" (see Mr. Bentinck's despatch No. 139 of 11th June). The first was signed by an Abyssinian, residing in Paris, and contained allegations of inhuman treatment of Abyssinians by Italians in Tripoli. Ras Tafari,

* Delayed in transmission.

on being reproached by Italian Minister, was apologetic and pleaded ignorance of articles, but next number contained another article signed by a secretary in Department of Foreign Affairs.

Count Colli is incensed beyond measure and has sent both articles to M. Mussolini and, pending the receipt of instructions, says that he will refuse to recognise or meet Ras Tafari.

Seriousness of situation lies in fact that heir-apparent's [? influence] has been getting weaker of late, and if Italian Minister obtains authorisation he intends to appeal to Empress and leading chiefs against Ras Tafari, which might possibly lead to an attempt to displace the latter.

Count Colli is convinced that whole trouble is due to French, who desire to make troubles for Italy here in order to prevent interference in Tunis.

[J 1810/19/1]

No. 74.

Mr. Phipps to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 2.)(No. 262.)
(Telegraphic.)

[By Bag.]

Paris, July 1, 1926.

MY telegram No. 259 of 30th June.

I happened to see the Italian Ambassador at a party last night. He told me that he was seeing M. Briand to-day respecting the Abyssinian question, regarding which he intended to get to grips with the latter.

I understand that the Italian Embassy professes to be surprised at the press campaign which has developed in France and Great Britain on the subject.

No. 75.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 3.)(No. 159.)
(Telegraphic.)

Rome, July 3, 1926.

MY despatch No. 530.

Signor Mussolini told me this morning that he was disturbed over situation at Addis Ababa. Several articles, very disagreeable to Italy, had recently appeared in Ras Tafari's paper, and His Highness had pleaded that he could not interfere with freedom of Abyssinian press. Moreover, His Highness's attitude towards Count Colli, which had previously been very friendly, was now quite the reverse. The French, Belgian and German Ministers had formed a "united front" against our agreement. The whole odium for that agreement was falling on Italy, and Signor Mussolini implied that British Legation was leaving Italian Legation to bear the brunt. I ridiculed this idea, and expressed regret that it had not been raised yesterday afternoon when I took Mr. Bentinck to visit Secretary-General. Signor Mussolini complained bitterly of attitude of French press, and countered my allusion to recent satisfactory article in the "Temps" by one to a later article in the "Echo de Paris." I expressed hope that conversation between M. Briand and Italian Ambassador yesterday would have cleared the air. Further, that when agreement had been examined by League of Nations in September we should obtain general support for it. Signor Mussolini said that in the meantime it had embittered relations between Italy and Abyssinia. He was trying to arrange that Duke of Abruzzi on his way back to Somaliland should visit Addis Ababa in return for Ras Tafari's visit here. He hoped that this would improve the atmosphere.

[J 1819/19/1]

No. 76.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).(No. 177.)
(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, July 3, 1926.

PARLIAMENTARY question for 6th July asks what is meant in the notes exchanged between Great Britain and Italy by exclusive Italian economic influence in the west of Abyssinia.

I propose to reply:—

"By their recognition of 'exclusive Italian economic influence' in Western Abyssinia, His Majesty's Government intended merely to bind themselves not to press the claims of British subjects competing with Italian concession seekers in that district. The Italian Government are aware that His Majesty's Government place this interpretation on these words."

Do you agree?

[J 1821/19/1]

No. 77.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 4.)

(No. 160.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Rome, July 4, 1926.

YOUR telegram No. 177.

In view of last sentence I have consulted Ministry for Foreign Affairs. They are quite agreeable, but would be grateful if words "intend merely to" could be omitted.

[J 1822/19/1]

No. 78.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 4.)

(No. 161.)

(Telegraphic.)

Rome, July 4, 1926.

MY immediately preceding telegram.

As you are aware from my recent reports, Italian feeling is becoming increasingly touchy on question of Abyssinia and our agreement, and it would be desirable in any parliamentary discussion to bear this in mind.

[J 1844/19/1]

No. 79.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 5.)

(No. 143. Confidential.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, June 12, 1926.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 96 of the 9th instant, I have the honour to report that, in agreement with my Italian colleague, I handed that afternoon to Ras Tafari the English text, together with an Amharic translation, of the note addressed on the 14th December last by Sir Ronald Graham to M. Mussolini regarding British and Italian interests in Abyssinia. We each of us compiled a short covering note which we compared beforehand (copies and translations enclosed). Although the notes were quite different, we saw no reason to modify them and thought it as well that they should not be the same. I pointed out to Count Colli, however, that it was not quite accurate to say in his note that the notes were exactly as they had been in December and that the French Minister knew of the modifications, one of which he had himself suggested. Count Colli said he would explain to Ras Tafari verbally that there had been some verbal alterations. I also remarked that M. Mussolini's personal message was not referred to (my telegram No. 87). This Count Colli said he had already delivered verbally and he could not be repeating continually the same assurances. He has, as you will see, mentioned in his note the sovereign rights of Ethiopia which are not called in question, and has made it clear that Abyssinia is free to grant or deny our requests. We agreed to explain to Ras Tafari that, as there was so much in the long notes which really only concerned Anglo-Italian relations, we had suggested that shorter notes should be presented. After due consideration, however, our two Governments had preferred to show the whole notes as they stood. This had all caused delay. In the second paragraph of my note I referred to article 18 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, as I have been so often asked why the notes should be communi-

cated to the Abyssinian Government at all. The rest of my note embodies your telegrams Nos. 56 and 60, which I was grateful to receive in time for inclusion.

2. Ras Tafari received me at 4.30 p.m. on the 9th instant and my Italian colleague immediately afterwards. His Highness seemed slightly nervous at first. I handed the note to him with my covering note, which I read out to him in French. He seemed distinctly gratified at learning that what I was saying was contained in my note. I offered to explain anything to him, and, if necessary, to delay my departure. Count Colli and I both offered to go with His Highness to the Empress to explain points to Her Majesty if Ras Tafari should so desire. His Highness was friendly as usual, but non-committal. After examining the notes he said he would let us know if he would like us to accompany him to the Empress. We then spoke of other matters. I understand that he and the Empress have been very busy ever since discussing the notes with the council of advisers.

3. A few hours before the notes were presented, Dr. Martin and Bilata Heroui both called at His Majesty's Legation. I consulted the former about the translation and I showed the latter the covering note which I proposed to hand to Ras Tafari. Bilata Heroui was much pleased at the friendly tone of that note, which he suggested His Highness might ask leave to publish. Dr. Martin, however, was very critical and much upset, as he has been during the last few weeks. M. Mussolini's speeches have succeeded in frightening him, as, I gather, they have frightened most Abyssinians, so that the groundless suspicions which I had been endeavouring since last January to dispel, have all been revived with greater intensity than before. The foreign press, including the British press, and our own parliamentary Opposition, have all assisted M. Mussolini in sowing seeds of suspicion in this country, and, of course, people here are not able to realise that the Opposition and any local "rag" have their own axes to grind and do not speak with authority. Why, it is asked, if their stories are mere inventions, are they not contradicted (see my telegram No. 70 of the 15th May).

4. My French colleague, as reported in my telegram No. 91 of the 7th instant, became most critical. His chief cause of complaint was that we were recognising the "exclusive economic influence" of Italy. Of this, I may observe, both Dr. Martin and my German colleague were also aware some weeks ago. The Italian Minister believes, from various remarks made by Abyssinians, that the Abyssinian Government were already in possession of the text before it was presented to them by us. M. Gausson's other causes for complaint seemed to be inspired by suspicion and dislike of Italy and jealousy of our joining with Italy. He holds, and in this I regret to report I agree with him, that, by our action we have considerably diminished our chances of obtaining the Tsana concession. In this I hope I may be wrong, but it seems to me that if ever the Italian Colonial Office wished to put a spoke in our wheel, they have, by having had everything their own way in this matter, succeeded admirably in their task. As I have already pointed out, Italy's desires are not immediate and urgent, whilst ours are.

5. Whilst we are, I understand, anxious to work with France as well as with Italy in this matter, I fear that Count Colli and his Government do not want this. What they really want is a big British stick with which to frighten the French. It is, moreover, a matter of great disappointment to me that it was not found possible to mention article 3 of our treaty of 1902 with the Emperor Menelik. This was a trump card which we held and should have been proof against much hostile criticism (see my telegrams Nos. 34 and 39 of the 8th and 16th March). I regret that we were unable to give any reassuring message to the Abyssinian Government regarding the sovereignty and independence of this country. All I could do in this respect was to show Bilata Heroui unofficially the printed text of article 10 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

I am forwarding copies of this despatch to Cairo and Khartum.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 1 in No. 79.

Mr. Bentinck to Ras Tafari.

Your Imperial Highness,

IN obedience to the instructions which I have received from His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, I have the honour to hand to your Imperial Highness the text of the note which His Majesty's Government

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addressed last December to the Italian Government asking for their co-operation in the negotiations with the Ethiopian Government regarding Lake Tsana when His Majesty's Government decide to reopen them. A translation of the note in Amharic is attached.

In accordance with article 18 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, the notes exchanged between His Majesty's Government and the Italian Government will be laid before the Secretariat of the League, but for reasons of friendship and courtesy the two Governments desire that these notes should first be shown to the Ethiopian Government.

In communicating to your Imperial Highness the text of the British note, I am to express the hope that the Abyssinian Government will find the notes acceptable to them, and I am authorised to offer to you full and frank explanations if you should be in doubt as to the meaning of any points in the British note when I return from England. In the meantime I trust that your Imperial Highness will consider the notes sympathetically.

Sir Austen Chamberlain directs me to add that he hopes that the text of the enclosed note will be sufficient to dispel any misconceptions or malicious rumours which may be current regarding the alleged intentions of His Majesty's Government. Further, Sir Austen Chamberlain directs me to assure your Imperial Highness of the continued friendship of His Majesty's Government and to express the hope that the Ethiopian Government will find in this exchange of notes only further proof of that friendship, inasmuch as the object which the exchange has in view will, it is hoped, prove to be as beneficial to Abyssinia as to the other countries concerned.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Addis Ababa, June 9, 1926.

Enclosure 2 in No. 79.

Translation of Note from Italian Minister to Ras Tafari covering the Italian Note to Great Britain of December 20, 1925.

His Highness Tafari Makonnen,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Highness the exact copy of the note sent on the 20th December, 1925, by his Excellency, M. Mussolini, Prime Minister of Italy, to Sir R. Graham, His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador at Rome, in reply to a note from the latter of the 14th December, 1925.

As your Highness will observe, by the two above-mentioned notes, an agreement has been concluded between the two Governments of Italy and England which defines the respective desires and the reciprocal engagements of the two Governments in Abyssinia, whence a friendly collaboration has resulted between them.

In the name of my Government I have the honour to assure your Highness that the above-mentioned agreement is of an exclusively economic character and that it is not only not intended to injure the sovereign rights of the Ethiopian Government, but is a fresh proof of the friendly intentions of Italy and England towards the Ethiopian Empire which remains absolutely free to accord or to deny the requests of an economic character which may be made to her by each of the two Governments.

It will be an honour for me to remain at your Highness's service to furnish you with any explanations which you may desire regarding the above-mentioned agreement.

I am convinced that after careful study your Highness will receive with good will and with a mind void of all suspicion the communication which I have the honour to make to you in the name of my Government.

G. COLLI.

[J 1829/19/1]

No. 80.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 5.)

(No. 530.)

Sir,

HIS Majesty's Ambassador at Paris was so good as to forward to me a copy of his despatch No. 1200 of the 28th ultimo, reporting a further discussion with the Sous-Directeur d'Afrique at the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs on the subject of the Lake Tsana Agreement.

Rome, July 2, 1926.

2. I notice that M. Ponsot, from the remarks reported in paragraph 2 of that despatch, is suspicious that the difficulties of the Italian Government in defining the eastern limits of the zone in which they desire to secure exclusive economic interests is due to hesitation as to the extent of the area which they may hope to earmark in this way. I do not think that this is the case. In all the discussions on the point which have taken place here the Italian officials have stated that the difficulty simply arises from the fact that the various areas described in article 4 of the tripartite agreement of 1906 have never been accurately defined, and indeed are hardly susceptible of very close definition. Italy, they say, does not now desire to claim economic rights in Abyssinia except in the zone in which her interests were recognised in 1906, but the exact limits of the zones in which the interests of the three Powers were so recognised have always been left vague and it would be very difficult to put forward at short notice exact proposals as to the boundaries contemplated by the tripartite agreement. The Italian Government are, however, perfectly ready to negotiate on the subject should the French Government so desire.

3. As regards M. Ponsot's remarks on the subject of Tunisia, I can only say that, for the reasons given in my private letter to Mr. Murray of the 18th ultimo, I do not think there is the slightest prospect of the Italian Government contemplating any surrender of their claims in that colony or in Morocco in return for French approval of the Lake Tsana Agreement. The officials of the Palazzo Chigi have, however, frequently assured me that they would be perfectly prepared to enter into negotiations with the French Government with the object of securing the reciprocal recognition of the exclusive economic interests of Italy and France in the areas in Abyssinia referred to in article 4 of the 1906 agreement.

4. In the meantime the whole negotiation is, unfortunately, at a standstill, owing to the inability of the Italian Embassy in Paris to inform its own Government of the exact nature of the French objections to the Italian side of the agreement. The Embassy declares that it cannot extract from the Quai d'Orsay any definite statement on the subject. I have explained the situation to the French Chargé d'Affaires here, the Ambassador being absent, but doubt if this will help matters, as the French Embassy is taking no hand in the question.

5. I am forwarding a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Ambassador in Paris.

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM.

[J 1823/19/1]

No. 81.

Mr. Phipps to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 5.)

(No. 265.)
(Telegraphic.)

Paris, July 3, 1926.

MY telegram No. 262.

According to this morning's "Petit Parisien" the Italian Ambassador had an interview with M. Briand yesterday respecting the Abyssinian question. The "Petit Parisien" hopes that M. Avezzana gave M. Briand satisfactory assurances respecting the Italian designs.

[J 1854/19/1]

No. 82.

The Marquess of Crewe to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 6.)

(No. 1247.)

HIS Majesty's representative at Paris presents his compliments to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of an extract from the "Temps" of the 5th July, 1926, respecting Franco-Italian relations regarding Abyssinia.

Paris, July 5, 1926.

[15702]

Enclosure in No. 82.

Extract from the "Temps" of July 5, 1926.

LA FRANCE ET L'ACCORD ANGLO-ITALIEN SUR L'ABYSSINIE.

LE Ministère des Affaires étrangères communique :

"L'Ambassadeur d'Italie est venu entretenir le Président du Conseil de la question de l'Accord anglo-italien relatif à l'Abyssinie.

"Le Baron Avezana a déclaré officiellement à M. Briand que par cet accord les intérêts français en Abyssinie n'étaient ni contestés, ni menacés.

"Le traité de 1906 intervenu entre l'Abyssinie, la France et l'Italie a pour but le respect de l'indépendance et de l'intégrité de l'Éthiopie et le présent accord s'inspire des mêmes principes.

"En ce qui concerne les stipulations d'ordre économiques, celles-ci ne portent aucune atteinte au régime de la porte ouverte en Abyssinie.

"Dans ces conditions, la continuation des polémiques de presse entre les journaux français, anglais et italiens ne répondrait pas à la situation.

"Ce problème ainsi qu'un certain nombre de questions méditerranéennes font l'objet entre les Gouvernements français et italien d'un examen amical.

"L'Accord anglo-italien vient d'ailleurs d'être déposé à Genève au secrétariat de la Société des Nations."

No. 83.

The Marquess of Crewe to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 6.)(No. 267.)
(Telegraphic.)

[By Bag.]

Paris, July 5, 1926.

MY despatch No. 1247 of to-day.

The counsellor of the Italian Embassy this afternoon informed a member of my staff that Baron Avezana had on 2nd July given full explanations to M. Briand respecting the Italian attitude on the Abyssinian question. The Italian counsellor added that there was now, as regards this question, a complete *détente* between the French and Italians.

[J 1820/1817/1]

No. 84.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Maclean (Addis Ababa).

(No. 73.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, July 6, 1926.

MY immediately preceding telegram (Lake Tsana), repeating Rome telegram No. 159.)

It is particularly important that no one connected with the Legation should do anything calculated to lend colour to Count Colli's complaints, all possible ground for which you should attempt to remove.

[J 1779/19/1]

No. 85.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 945.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 7, 1926.

SINCE you wrote your despatch No. 530 of the 2nd instant regarding negotiations between the French and Italian Governments on the subject of Abyssinia, your Excellency will have seen that the French Government, in a communiqué published by the "Temps" on the 5th July, have expressed themselves satisfied with the explanations of the Italian Government.

2. The first stage in the negotiations may be considered as satisfactorily terminated, and all that now remains to be done before the French Government reply to the notes addressed to them last January is for the three interested Governments to determine the price to be paid for French support. Mr. Phipps, in his despatch No. 112 of the 28th ultimo, suggests that the price to be paid by the Italians for French support will include some sacrifice on their part of their claims as regards persons of Italian origin residing in Tunisia; in addition, Italy will recognise that French economic interests must take precedence over Italian interests in that part of Abyssinia not covered by the Anglo-Italian notes. Some indication of the price which the French Government expect His Majesty's Government to pay for their support is given in paragraphs 4 and 5 of my telegram to you, No. 73 of the 5th March. His Majesty's Government would be prepared to reaffirm their recognition of French predominance in the area assigned to France under article 4 of the Tripartite Agreement of 1906, and though they would certainly not be willing to guarantee Abyssinian independence against all comers, they might be prepared to consider the possibility of giving some guarantee in the form of a statement of what they considered their obligations towards Abyssinia to be under article 10 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

3. There can be no question that the Lake Tsana project affords fewer practical difficulties in the way of immediate execution than the construction of the projected Italian railway. Also, the discussion of the price to be paid by His Majesty's Government for French support offers fewer difficulties and should occupy less time than the Franco-Italian discussions. This being so, His Majesty's Government feel sure that the Italian Government, relying on paragraph 16 of the Italian note, will not desire to delay the execution of the Tsana project owing to any difficulties they may experience in their own negotiations with the French.

4. In these circumstances, I propose, provided M. Mussolini agrees, to approach the French Government with a view to obtaining from them the support in regard to the Tsana scheme, which is necessary to its success. I shall therefore be glad, unless you see any objection, if you will draw M. Mussolini's attention to the above considerations, and inform him that, subject to his concurrence, His Majesty's Government propose now to ask the French Government to reply separately to the Italian and British requests for French support in order that the Franco-British negotiations may be brought to a speedy conclusion and conversations opened with the Abyssinian Government with a view to the early realisation of the Tsana project. His Majesty's Government, in making this suggestion, have no idea of dissociating themselves from Italy in the endeavour to give a more precise meaning to the Tripartite Agreement of 1906, and they will be prepared to use their good offices with the French Government, if the Italian Government so desire, in the Franco-Italian conversations in Paris as well as in any negotiations which the Italian Government may see fit to commence at Addis Ababa.

5. You should, if necessary, make it clear to M. Mussolini that His Majesty's Government have done their part loyally in this matter, and that it would, I think, be unreasonable if the Italian Government were to put any obstacles in our way. We have hitherto accepted as binding obligations which under the recent agreement are only contingent. We have repeatedly endeavoured to help the Italian Government in their discussion of this question with the French, and it would indeed be a poor return for our friendly conduct if the Italian Government were now to adopt the attitude that, if they for the present are unable to realise their objects, we should be debarred from following ours. I do not propose to enter into a dispute over this point, but I shall be profoundly disappointed if Italy does not fully and freely reciprocate our friendly action.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 1885/19/1]

No. 86.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 961.)

(Extract.)

Foreign Office, July 9, 1926.

THE Italian Ambassador informed me to-day that he had been instructed by Signor Mussolini to speak to me on the subject of Abyssinia. Signor Mussolini was a good deal disturbed by the attitude adopted by Ras Tafari towards the

Anglo-Italian exchange of notes and by the excitement produced by certain press articles. He added that it would appear also that the German Minister had intervened and that the French Minister, who had perhaps not perfectly understood the wishes of his Government, had also contributed to alarm the Abyssinian mind. Signor Mussolini desired the Ambassador to enquire whether in these circumstances I would instruct Mr. Maclean to concert with Count Colli with a view to reassuring Ras Tafari as to the innocence of our intentions and of the absence of any wish on our part to impinge upon the independence and integrity of Abyssinia.

I replied that I had found Mr. Bentinck, who had just returned on leave, less disturbed than Count Colli would appear to have been. The Ambassador might have noticed the explanations which I gave in the House of Commons the other day and which themselves were of the reassuring character of which he spoke. I had some reason to think that there might be a parliamentary discussion on the same subject next week in which I should amplify and emphasise these assurances. I was inclined, therefore, to take no further step at the moment, for no doubt Mr. Maclean would bring what I had said to the knowledge of Ras Tafari and make any suitable comment upon it. For the moment I thought that what was required was a little time for the first excitement to calm down; one or two of the phrases which we had used in the notes were perhaps not very well chosen, and without explanation had given some cause for the suspicions which they had excited, but I hoped that, if time were given for the first excitement to die down, we should not meet with any great difficulty. I would in any case watch the situation and send further instructions if they were needed. At the special request of the Ambassador I undertook at once to telegraph to Mr. Maclean instructions to keep in close touch with Count Colli, though I was certain that he would in any case have done this, and, if he thought any further explanations necessary, to concert with Count Colli about them.

A few pleasant observations on the nature of the relations between our Governments during the last two years and on the interest which we had in acting together brought our conversation to a close.

No. 87.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Maclean (Addis Ababa).

(No. 75.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, July 9, 1926.

ITALIAN Ambassador expressed to-day Signor Mussolini's anxiety as to attitude of Ras Tafari towards Anglo-Italian notes, and asked that I would instruct you to concert with Count Colli reassuring statement. After referring to my answers in Parliament, which you would doubtless bring to Ras Tafari's notice, I said I thought for the moment nothing further was required, but I would ask you to continue in close touch with Count Colli.

No. 88.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 10.)

(No. 112.)

(Telegraphic.)

YOUR telegram No. 73.

Addis Ababa, July 9, 1926.

Utmost care has been taken in the sense of your telegram (see my despatch No. 158 of 28th June).

Count Colli has, I think, received telegram from Italian Government and (possibly in consequence thereof) had an audience with Ras Tafari on 6th July at request of latter. He still holds to his intention to put the matter before the Empress and big chiefs, but he having so far receded from his original standpoint I am of opinion that position is very much less serious and that trouble may blow over.

[J 1911/19/1]

No. 89.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 12.)

(No. 148.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, June 15, 1926.

WITH reference to my telegrams Nos. 99 and 100 of to-day's date, I have the honour to transmit herewith translation of the reply of the Ethiopian Government to the notes which my Italian colleague and I had addressed to them on the 9th instant regarding the Anglo-Italian Agreement. It will be seen that the Abyssinian Government propose to submit the matter to the League of Nations. Count Colli and I see nothing to object to in this. It seems a natural course of procedure. Count Colli does not, however, think that the Abyssinian Government will find the League ready to encourage them in any attempt to obstruct measures which are for the welfare and progress of Ethiopia. Count Colli, I may here mention, makes no secret of the fact that the Italians do not propose to ask for the railway concession in the near future, and he has told Ras Tafari this. He realises that our two desiderata cannot really be granted contemporaneously.

2. Before I had seen the note this evening I was invited to a farewell tea with Ras Tafari. His Highness afterwards asked me to accompany him into the next room. He then said he wished to tell me that when in London in 1924, King George had been so kind to him and had said things to him which he would never forget. His Majesty had reminded him of the friendship which had existed between his father, Ras Makonnen, and King Edward, and had expressed his desire that this friendship should continue between himself and Ras Tafari. Even since his (Ras Tafari's) childhood his father had brought him up to value the friendship of England. On the top of all this, we had concluded an agreement with Italy regarding Abyssinia and never consulted Abyssinia, although negotiations had started as far back as 1919. There was a lot in the agreement which the Abyssinians did not like and they were deeply offended. When I returned from England he would discuss the whole agreement with me and ask for full explanations.

3. I told His Highness that, from what he had said, it appeared to me that he had completely misunderstood the whole agreement. I gave him a simple illustration of the way it struck me. I would, I said, gladly discuss the whole matter frankly with him on my return. I asked upon what points he especially desired an explanation. He replied that he would like to go through the whole note with me and have the whole matter explained. He then told me the gist of his reply.

4. I said that I was glad at what he had said about friendship with my country, and I told him of my conversation with the Empress yesterday (see my despatch No. 146). If I could feel sure that the Ethiopian Government really desired the friendship of England, our task together would be so much easier. But, I insisted, there must be mutual trust and straight dealings. He must have confidence in me and sometimes allow me to speak frankly. He must not allow mischief makers to intrigue and disturb our relations. There were, as he knew, far too many of these.

5. His Highness responded most readily and warmly. He begged me not to listen to intriguers, but to come to him frankly if we should ever have any differences or disagreements. He assured me that he had confidence in me personally, and hoped that this would increase more and more, and he would deal frankly with me.

6. His Highness then begged me to convey his greetings to the King and the greetings of the Princess to the Queen. He had intended sending a personal letter to His Majesty, but as the Empress had not done so, his doing so would have been misunderstood. Would I, he added, please assure my King, Sir Austen Chamberlain, and the Foreign Office of the sincere desire of the Empress and himself, speaking for the Government of Abyssinia, ever to strengthen the friendship between our two countries. This I undertook to do.

I am forwarding copies of this despatch and of its enclosure to Cairo and Khartum.

I have, &c.

(For the Minister),

G. T. MacLEAN.

Enclosure in No. 89.

*Ras Taffari to Mr. Bentinck.**Addis Ababa, June 15, 1926.**8th Saneï, 1918.*

(After Greetings.)

I HAVE received the note which you sent me, together with your letter of the 9th June, 1926. The terms of the note are the same as that which was sent by his Excellency the Italian Minister, Count Colli. The contents of the note make it plain to us that both your Governments have agreed between yourselves that the British Government should obtain permission to construct a barrage in order to store the waters of our Tana Lake and that the Italian Government, on its part, should also obtain permission to construct a railway across Ethiopia. The fact that you informed us together about the agreement made between yourselves clearly shows us that you have the intention of obliging us to do it in a hurry and we have quickly seen that, first of all, we must examine and understand the matter. As the British Government had already started direct negotiations with the Ethiopian Government in this matter, we should have thought that, whether the future negotiations would be successful or not, the British Government would have settled the question with us, and we never suspected that the British Government would make an agreement with another Government concerning our lake. Therefore, this matter is one which ought to be examined first, and it is necessary for us to submit it to the League of Nations.

(Seal of Ras Taffari.)

[J 1916/19/1]

No. 90.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 12.)

(No. 154.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, June 19, 1926.

WITH reference to Mr. Bentinck's despatch No. 148 of the 15th instant, transmitting a translation of the Abyssinian Government's reply to this Legation on the subject of the Anglo-Italian exchange of notes, I have the honour to transmit herewith a translation of the Abyssinian reply to the Italian Minister.

2. Count Colli asked Mr. Zaphiro to go to the Italian Legation on the 16th instant to compare and discuss the two replies, and the latter has informed me that he found Count Colli very depressed and dissatisfied with the reply sent to him. He (Count Colli) said that Ras Taffari was angry with him, whilst he was very friendly and cordial with Mr. Bentinck.

3. He said that he had already sent to tell the Ras that it was a mistake from the Abyssinian point of view to have said that the matter would be submitted to the League, and that if it were submitted, the League would certainly advise Abyssinia to agree to the requests of the two Governments. A further point in their note which he represented as being unfounded was the sentence: "The fact that you informed us together about the agreement made between yourselves, clearly shows us that you have the intention of obliging us to do it in a hurry." The best proof that this was not so, the Italian Minister said, is that in his covering note he specifically pointed out that the Abyssinian Government was entirely free to grant or refuse the request.

4. He then went on to say that he was of the opinion that it was the French Minister who advised Ras Taffari to appeal to the League of Nations (see Mr. Bentinck's telegram No. 91 of the 7th instant) and said that he would go and see M. Gaussen and explain the whole matter to him.

5. On the 17th instant Mr. Zaphiro had occasion to see Ras Taffari. His Highness received him in a very friendly manner, enquired whether Mr. Bentinck had left Addis Ababa contented, and added that he had sent his own motor car to convey him to the station as a special mark of his appreciation. After this preamble he asked Mr. Zaphiro what he thought of the reply to the notes. Mr. Zaphiro said he considered the reply very friendly in tone and hoped that when Mr. Bentinck returned from leave he might be able to begin negotiations. His Highness smiled at this and said that they would have to consider many things first.

6. He gave Mr. Zaphiro to understand that they have not yet decided whether they will submit the matter to the League or not. On being asked if that were so, why was it explicitly stated in the reply, he said that as the Anglo-Italian notes are to be registered with the secretariat of the League, his Government considered that, as Abyssinia is also a member of the League, they would have to do the same—a somewhat involved process of reasoning.

7. Mr. Zaphiro further reports that there is no excitement whatever among outsiders, and he considers that the matter is already almost forgotten, that the Abyssinian Government were, in point of fact, expecting notes which would make much more serious demands from Abyssinia (hence the rumours in the town of war between Abyssinia, England and Italy), and that they now cannot understand why the notes need have been communicated to them at all.

I have, &c.

G. T. MACLEAN.

Enclosure in No. 90.

*Ras Taffari to Count Colli.**Addis-Abeba, le 8 Saneï 1918 (15 juin 1926).*

(Traduction.)

LA paix soit avec vous.

La note du 2 Saneï 1918 de l'an de grâce que vous m'avez envoyée, avec votre lettre, m'est parvenue.

Les paroles de cette note, que vous m'avez envoyée, sont identiques à la note que l'honorable Ministre d'Angleterre Charles Bentinck m'a envoyée.

Selon les paroles écrites dans cette note, nous nous sommes rendus compte de l'accord des deux Gouvernements, pour obtenir du Gouvernement éthiopien, le Gouvernement anglais, la concession, pour qu'il puisse endiguer et emmagasiner les eaux de notre lac Tzana, et, de son côté, le Gouvernement Italien pour qu'il puisse étendre un chemin de fer à travers l'Éthiopie. Comme cet accord que vous nous avez communiqué ensemble nous montre clairement que vous avez la pensée de nous obliger à faire vite, nous avons compris de suite qu'avant tout la chose mérite d'être examinée attentivement.

Pour cela, comme cette chose mérite d'être d'abord examinée, il nous a été nécessaire de présenter et de communiquer l'affaire à la Société des Nations.

(Sceaux de Son Altesse Ras Tafari.)

[J 1948/19/1]

No. 91.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 13.)

(No. 114.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, July 12, 1926.

YOUR telegram No. 75.

Italian wireless published "Times" report of your answers in Parliament on the subject of Anglo-Italian notes, which was brought to notice of Ras Taffari. His only comment was that he could not understand why interpretation therein given of "exclusive economic influence" had not been embodied in notes.

It would, I think, do no harm if I were enabled to give Ras Taffari official text of your answer, as unofficial source of his present information possibly causes doubt as to its correctness. See my despatch No. 165 of 12th July.

No. 92.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 14.)

(No. 115.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, July 13, 1926.

MY telegram No. 107.

Count Colli informed me on 11th July that incident between himself and Ras Taffari could now be considered as closed.

No. 93.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Maclean (Addis Ababa).

(No. 76.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

YOUR telegram No. 114.

Foreign Office, July 14, 1926.

On 30th June, in answer to question in Parliament on Anglo-Italian notes, I stated that support which the two Governments undertook to afford each other in Abyssinia could not by any latitude in interpretation be held to import economic partition. On 5th July I explained that by their recognition of "exclusive Italian economic influence" in Western Abyssinia His Majesty's Government bind themselves not to press the claims of British subjects competing with Italian concession seekers in that district. I added that any agreement between Italian Government and ourselves could have no binding effect upon Abyssinian Government, and that we were not going to take up discussion with Abyssinian Government until they had had full time to consider the matter. It was quite clear that we could not give away rights of any other nation or any other nationals. Agreement was certainly not to be used and could not be used for purpose of coercing Abyssinian Government. I believed agreement to be in interests of all three parties, but added that, of course, the Abyssinian Government had a perfect right to judge of what was in the interests of Abyssinia.

You should, if you think fit, bring above to knowledge of Ras Tafari.

Full text follows by post.

[J 1960/19/1]

No. 94.

The Marquess of Crewe to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 15.)

(No. 1318.)

Sir,

Paris, July 14, 1926.

WITH reference to Mr. Phipps's despatch No. 1200 of the 20th June, and to your despatch to Rome No. 945 of the 7th July, I have the honour to inform you that the Italian Ambassador asked to see me on Monday evening, the 12th July, when he told me that he was anxious to hear my opinion on the French attitude with regard to the Anglo-Italian Agreement on the subject of Lake Tsana and the Italian sphere of influence.

2. Baron Avvezana complained bitterly of the manner in which he had been treated by the Quai d'Orsay. He had raised the subject he believed ten times with M. Briand or M. Berthelot, and had always been told that M. Ponsot was so fully occupied with Moroccan affairs that it was impossible for him to state the full case to his chiefs, with the result that the Ambassador had never been able to find out what the French really wanted, and that he felt that he had been personally slighted and placed in a difficult position with his own Government. He hoped that I would see M. Berthelot and explain to him the urgency of arriving at an agreement between the three Powers, in order that when the agreement is lodged at Geneva there may not be the faintest appearance of discord between them in the face of Abyssinia.

3. In the opinion of the Italian Government the arrangement made with His Majesty's Government over Lake Tsana simply involves the confirmation of the rights in the western zone of influence, no fresh concession being made to Italy thereby. In these circumstances the French would only be asked to declare themselves disinterested in the said zone so far as competition with Italian concessions, &c., is concerned.

4. Baron Avvezana went on to complain of the representation of Abyssinia at the League of Nations by M. Lagarde. He regarded this appointment as the creation of a centre of intrigue in Abyssinia directed against Italy, and perhaps also against Great Britain.

5. I told the Ambassador that I was very glad he had come to talk this over, and I would certainly see M. Berthelot as soon as I could, though the holiday on the 14th might make it necessary to postpone my call at the Quai d'Orsay. I agreed that it is impossible that there should be any apparent difference of opinion between the three countries, and would say so to M. Berthelot, to whom I would also mention, in general terms, the obvious objections that might be taken to the presence of M. Lagarde at Geneva. I must say, at the same time, that the delays which had

taken place in this business were incomprehensible to me, and I thought that everybody must be getting as tired of it as I am myself. I could not see that any question of principle is involved affecting either France, Italy or ourselves, while the effect of longer delay on the Abyssinians could be nothing but bad.

6. As a matter of fact, I was able to see M. Berthelot late last evening, he having received a visit from the Italian Ambassador earlier in the day. I explained that Baron Avvezana had been to see me, and had seemed disturbed about the situation, so that I hoped that the whole matter could be cleared up, now that we three had the opportunity of putting our heads together.

7. M. Berthelot said he believed that he had been able to set the Italian Ambassador's mind completely at rest. He had pointed out that, in the first instance, the Anglo-Italian arrangement had been arrived at without any direct reference to France, and it was necessary for the French Government to feel sure that their interests were in no way compromised by it. He had now received the assurance both of Italy and of ourselves that French interests in Abyssinia, as defined in the agreement of 1906, are in no way affected by the new arrangement between Great Britain and Italy. This assurance the French Government are prepared to accept fully, and, this being so, no further question seems to arise, and the matter should be regarded as concluded. M. Berthelot added that Baron Avvezana had asked him whether this meant that at Geneva French support of the arrangement can be counted upon, and M. Berthelot had replied that he saw no reason why France should raise any question concerning it.

8. The Italian Ambassador, M. Berthelot went on to say, had complained of the presence at Geneva of M. Lagarde. That gentleman is *fou*, but he is a private individual, not in the service of France, and to get rid of him might not be entirely easy. I reminded M. Berthelot of what had happened last winter, when we had made representations at the Quai d'Orsay about the language held by M. Lagarde, and when we had received, on the 4th November, 1925, a copy of the instructions sent to the French Ambassador at Addis Ababa. He was warned of the danger that M. Lagarde's observations, made during a discussion of the Slavery Commission of the League of Nations, might prevent Ras Tafari from realising the feelings of cordial confidence which unite our two Governments. If I might state my own opinion, I thought it would be an excellent thing if some other representative of Abyssinia at Geneva could be found. That there must be some of them who can read and write the languages in which the proceedings are conducted M. Berthelot replied that he realised that the presence of M. Lagarde is something of *une équivoque*, and he would do what he could to get rid of it, but he could not feel quite certain of succeeding.

9. I asked whether the Italian Ambassador was prepared to regard the Abyssinian question as standing entirely by itself, or whether he had in any way introduced the Mediterranean question which might be considered in conjunction with it, as several points remained unsettled in connection with them. M. Berthelot said that he had told Baron Avvezana that neither the possibility of giving some satisfaction to Italy at Tangier, nor the position which Italians and their descendants would ultimately hold in Tunis are ripe for consideration at this moment. Now that Morocco is quiet, they are engaging the full attention of the Quai d'Orsay. He could say to me that, the Tangier question being for Italy one of *amour-propre*, he did not think there would be much difficulty in settling it. As regards Tunis, it was evident that France could not agree to Italians retaining their nationality generation after generation, and on this the French Government would be quite firm, though he fully hoped for a friendly settlement.

10. In conclusion, he said that he disliked the idea of bargaining gains in one part of the world against concessions in another, and thought that each of these questions must be taken on its merits. I have no doubt that he genuinely holds this view, but it probably would not prevent him, when the Tunis difficulty has to be debated later, from pointing out how *coulant* and pleasant the French Government had been when the Italians had made advantageous arrangement in Abyssinia without any preliminary consultation with the Quai d'Orsay. You will, no doubt, note that M. Berthelot made no allusion whatever to the possibility hinted at in your telegram No. 180—of the Spaniards acquiring a position at Tangier as mandatories of the League of Nations, and, of course, I do not know whether this possibility has ever occurred to him.

11. Last night I received a personal note from the Italian Ambassador, dated the 13th July, informing me of his conversation with M. Berthelot, in which he had

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received the assurance that, after his statements concerning the question of Lake Tsana, the French Government had no objections whatever to make on the agreement which had come about between the British and Italian Governments, M. Berthelot also thinking that the communiqué which had appeared in the press rendered needless any written reply on the subject. Baron Avvezana added that full satisfaction was also given to him on the question of Tunis and Tangier. As he goes into no detail on either of those topics, I am inclined to think that M. Berthelot's friendly observations on them must have been of a quite general character.

I have, &c.
CREWE.

[C 7943/77/22]

No. 95.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).

(No. 2047.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, July 15, 1926.

AFTER the conversation recorded in my despatch No. 2046 of to-day's date, M. de Fleuriau added that he would like to tell me of a conversation which he had had with the Turkish Ambassador in London. Ahmed Ferid Bey had spoken to him the other day about Italian policy. He had expressed himself as perturbed by the apparently aggressive attitude of Italy first towards Abyssinia and then towards Albania, and had sought from M. de Fleuriau some appreciation of Italian policy. M. de Fleuriau had given a reassuring reply, and he told me that he himself did not believe that Signor Mussolini contemplated any aggression. It might be that in Albania he was pressing Italian economic interests. In Abyssinia it was certain that the railway spoken of in the Anglo-Italian notes would not be made for many years. If the peace of Europe were disturbed by other causes, Italy might be tempted to use such an opportunity, but, as he had told the Turkish Ambassador, he did not believe that Signor Mussolini intended to break the peace. I expressed my agreement with M. de Fleuriau's appreciation. I told him of the conversation which the Turkish Ambassador had had with me during our Mosul negotiations (see my despatch to Sir Ronald Lindsay No. 359 of the 23rd April), when he had given me the impression that he would have been reassured for his own country if I had told him that Italy was contemplating an attack on some other State. I had on that occasion held very much the same language as M. de Fleuriau. I had said that I did not believe that Signor Mussolini entertained any aggressive intentions, but that it was impossible to say what action he might take if the peace of the world were disturbed by other Powers. I further observed to M. de Fleuriau that I believed the French and British military attachés in Rome had compared notes and that they were agreed that not only was there nothing to arouse the suspicion that Italy was preparing an attack, but that the state of her arsenals was such that she was not in a position at the present time to undertake any serious enterprise. I told M. de Fleuriau of the news which I had received from Durazzo and in general terms of what had passed between Sir Ronald Graham and Signor Mussolini on this subject. The conclusion which I personally had drawn from the reports received by me was that the Italian Minister had been more indiscreet than he admitted, but that Ahmed Bey had exaggerated what he had said in the endeavour to engage the French, the Serbs and ourselves in his differences with Italy. He had no doubt signed a very embarrassing agreement as regards the Italian Bank and it was very probable that he would like to use us to pull his chestnuts out of the fire.

In conclusion M. de Fleuriau remarked that he thought there was little danger to European peace at this moment. The problems of the time were the internal problems of our different countries rather than their international rivalries or differences.

I am, &c.
AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

No. 96.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 18.)

(No. 116.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

MY telegram No. 114.

Journal "Light and Peace" in issue of 15th July published in Italian with vernacular translation the text of telegram from Signor Mussolini to Italian Minister requesting latter to assure Ras Tafari in his name that rumours of hostilities on the part of Italy are absolutely groundless.

Addis Ababa, July 17, 1926.

No. 97.

[J 1996/19/1]

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 19.)

(No. 582.)

Sir,

Rome, July 16, 1926.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge receipt of your despatch No. 945 of the 7th instant regarding the negotiations on the subject of the Lake Tsana agreement. I thought it undesirable to cast any shadow of doubt on Italian acquiescence in the course proposed in your despatch under reference. Therefore, when I saw the Italian Prime Minister this morning I treated his agreement as a matter of course. I first expressed your pleasure at learning the successful outcome of the discussions between the Italian Embassy in Paris and the Quai d'Orsay. This satisfactory result enabled us to take a further step forward. We now proposed to endeavour to enlist French support for our part of the Anglo-Italian agreement, and to request the French Government to reply in a favourable sense to the note which we had addressed to them in January on the subject. It was probable that the French would require some compensation in return for such support. I indicated to Signor Mussolini the limit to which we were prepared to go, as stated in your despatch, and said that I felt sure that his Excellency would have no objection either to the course we proposed to adopt or to the compensation we were ready to offer. If the Italian Government, on their side, in negotiating for French support for their part of our agreement required our good offices or the help of our Embassy in Paris, these would be gladly afforded, but the tenor of the recent Franco-Italian conversations had been so satisfying that I did not expect that anything of the kind would be required.

2. Signor Mussolini at once agreed to my proposal. He procured and read to me a telegram from the Italian Ambassador in Paris giving an account of a conversation with M. Berthelot, and he said that the further stages of the discussion ought not to offer any difficulties. Baron Romano Avvezana had asked M. Berthelot whether, in return for recognising the Italian exclusive rights in the Italian zone under the 1906 agreement, the French expected Italian recognition of their rights in the French zone, and M. Berthelot had replied in the affirmative. I note with some relief that no allusion had been made to Italian concessions in Tunis or elsewhere, as I think it extremely improbable that the Italians would be ready to offer any such concessions in return for French consent to the Abyssinian agreement.

3. Signor Mussolini added that he thought that when the French had answered our notes and general agreement had been obtained, it would be desirable that we should concert a communiqué "à trois" for insertion in the press. Such a communiqué would not only put an end to suspicion and comment in Europe, but would also produce a strong and favourable effect at Addis Ababa.

4. The French Ambassador, who has just returned from Paris, tells me that the Quai d'Orsay is now completely reassured regarding the whole question and that no further difficulties on the French side need be anticipated. He declared, however, that, while M. Briand was friendly disposed towards Italy, the same could not be said regarding the Quai d'Orsay as a whole. He had found there a deep-rooted feeling of dislike and suspicion towards Italy, the product of unfortunate speeches and press articles in this country, which it would not be easy to dispel.

5. Before parting from Signor Mussolini this morning I said that I was glad to hear that Italo-Abyssinian relations had improved and that Count Colli was now happier as to the situation at Addis Ababa. I thought that perhaps Count Colli had been inclined to exaggerate his account of Abyssinian feelings, and I showed

Signor Mussolini the article from Ras Taffari's paper, enclosed in your despatch No. 967 of the 12th instant, which had so greatly perturbed Count Colli. Signor Mussolini said that the situation had certainly improved. He read the article in "Light and Peace," and chuckled over the allusion to Corfu at the end of it. He agreed that the article in question was innocuous.

I have, &c.
R. GRAHAM

No. 98.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received July 21.)

(No. 118.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, July 19, 1926.

THE local journal the "Courier of Ethiopia," which is under French direction, has published in issue of 16th July a notice, of which the following is a literal translation:—

"The rumour has been current in Addis Ababa that France was associating herself with recent Anglo-Italian *démarche* regarding Tsana and request for a railway accompanied by a zone of economic influence more or less exclusive. We do not know the origin of this misleading rumour, but we can state that it is entirely incorrect."

I can only assume that this notice is inspired by the French Legation.

[J 2021/19/1]

No. 99.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Maclean (Addis Ababa).

(No. 258.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 21, 1926.

I TRANSMIT to you herewith a copy of a memorandum dealing with the Anglo-Italian Tsana Agreement which was prepared in this Department for my use in the event of a debate in Parliament on Abyssinia. At present it seems improbable that there will be any such debate, but the memorandum may be of use to you as a definition of the policy of His Majesty's Government in Abyssinia.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

Enclosure in No. 99.

British Policy in Abyssinia.

IT is essential, in the interests of Egypt and the Sudan, to prevent outside interference with the sources of the Nile. This consideration has governed the policy of His Majesty's Government for the past thirty years (*cf.* the agreement with France signed on the 21st March, 1899, in which His Majesty's Government undertook, in return for a reciprocal French undertaking, not to acquire either territory or political influence to the west of the line formed by the watershed between the Nile and the Congo).

2. The sources of the Blue Nile being in Abyssinian territory, His Majesty's Government sought to protect them by a treaty with the Emperor Menelik, concluded on the 15th May, 1902, under which Abyssinia undertook not to construct or allow to be constructed any work across the Blue Nile, Lake Tsana or the Sobat which would arrest the flow of their waters into the Nile except in agreement with His Majesty's Government and the Government of the Sudan.

3. These precautions were taken before the potentialities of Lake Tsana as a reservoir could be verified by technical examination. This was first undertaken in 1903 by Mr. Dupuis, a distinguished British engineer in the Egyptian service, and his report was published in the following year as an appendix to the late Sir William Garstin's masterly study of the Upper Nile, which has formed the basis of all subsequent irrigation developments.

Again, in 1916 an Anglo-Egyptian Commission visited Lake Tsana with the permission of the Abyssinian Government. In 1920 and 1921 another technical commission proceeded to the spot for the same purpose and received every possible assistance and courtesy from the Abyssinian Government. The report of this commission has recently been published by the Egyptian Ministry of Public Works. *Inter alia*, it shows clearly that the projected works will not raise the level of the lake above the normal maximum, nor occasion any damage to churches or other objects of veneration on the islands or foreshores.

4. In the light of the technical information as to the essential rôle which Lake Tsana must play in the agriculture development of Egypt and the Sudan, His Majesty's Government have constantly endeavoured to induce the Abyssinian Government to carry a step further the undertaking given by them in 1902 and agree to the utilisation of Lake Tsana as a reservoir.

Unfortunately, the consideration on its merits of this proposal was rendered difficult by the jealousy and suspicion of other Powers. It was probably due to these causes that in 1914 a satisfactory agreement, which was on the point of signature, at the last moment failed to be concluded.

5. The tripartite agreement of 1906 represented an attempt on the part of the three Great Powers most directly concerned in Abyssinia to define their respective interests in such a way as to obviate causes of friction and to safeguard the integrity and independence of Abyssinia by preventing its becoming the object of the rivalry of more advanced nations. Partial success can certainly be claimed for this agreement in that during the twenty years it has been in force Abyssinian integrity and independence have not been menaced. The extension of the French railway from the frontier to Addis Ababa has proved of inestimable benefit to all classes in Abyssinia and has not impaired Abyssinian sovereignty. The public works contemplated in the recent Anglo-Italian exchange of notes would prove hardly less beneficial to Abyssinia, and would certainly constitute no menace to her integrity or independence.

6. On the other hand, the 1906 agreement was not of itself sufficient to put an end to the jealous and obstructive attitude of the Powers towards legitimate attempts on the part of any one of them to develop its special interests. The failure of His Majesty's Government to secure the agreement of the Abyssinian Government to the utilisation of Lake Tsana affords an instance of this reacting on the unwillingness of the Abyssinians to commit themselves to anything which might be depicted to them as affording an excuse for foreign penetration.

7. Whilst, therefore, no opportunity was lost of impressing on the Abyssinian Government the importance which His Majesty's Government continued to attach to the utilisation of Lake Tsana—as, for instance, in the interviews which Ras Taffari had with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald when Secretary of State in 1924—no progress could be made until something had been done to satisfy the other Powers chiefly concerned that British aspirations in this direction did not menace their interests or conflict with their engagements either under the agreement of 1906 or under the Covenant of the League of Nations.

8. Satisfactory assurances in both respects have been afforded by the Anglo-Italian exchange of notes and the discussions which have taken place with the French Government. The agreement embodied in the exchange of notes, as has been made clear in Parliament in answer to a question on the 30th June, could not by any latitude in interpretation be held to import economic partition. In a further reply on the 5th July it was stated that the Anglo-Italian Agreement could have no binding effect upon the Abyssinian Government, and that it was not proposed to resume discussions with them until they had had full time to consider the matter. The agreement was certainly not to be used, and could not be used, for the purpose of coercing the Abyssinian Government. In the opinion of His Majesty's Government, it was in the interests of all three parties, but, of course, the Abyssinian Government had a perfect right to judge of what was in the interests of Abyssinia.

9. It has been suggested, and the French Government were at first inclined to suspect, that the British recognition of "exclusive Italian economic influence" in Western Abyssinia was in contradiction with the policy of the open door. On this point the communiqué issued by the French Government on the 5th July regarding the assurances which they had received from the Italian Ambassador reads as follows: "En ce qui concerne les stipulations d'ordre économiques, celles-ci ne portent aucune atteinte au régime de la porte ouverte en Abyssinie." In this respect the Anglo-Italian Agreement represents no more than a British renunciation of hypothetical economic possibilities of a general nature in order to concentrate on the essential interest constituted by the utilisation of Lake Tsana.

[J 1996/19/1]

No. 100.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).

(No. 2107.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, July 23, 1926.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 1943 of the 7th instant regarding the Lake Tsana concession, I transmit to your Lordship herewith a copy of a despatch on this subject from His Majesty's Ambassador at Rome.

2. I shall be glad if you will ask the French Government whether, in view of the communiqué to the press enclosed in your despatch No. 1247 of the 5th instant stating that they are now satisfied with the assurances given by the British and Italian Governments, they are in a position to discuss the conditions under which they would be prepared to give a favourable reply to our request for their support in respect of our Tsana negotiations with the Abyssinian Government.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 2049/19/1]

No. 101.

Acting Secretary-General, League of Nations, to Foreign Office.—(Received July 24.)

Sir,

Geneva, July 22, 1926.

I HAVE the honour to communicate to you herewith a translation of a note which His Royal Highness the Ras Tafari, Heir Apparent and Regent of the Empire of Abyssinia, has addressed to me, together with certain annexes, regarding an agreement stated to have been recently reached between His Majesty's Government and the Italian Government.

A copy of the reply which I have sent to the Ras Tafari is also forwarded herewith for your information.

The documents in question are being communicated to the members of the League of Nations.

I have, &c.

INAZO NITOBÉ,

Acting Secretary-General.

Enclosure 1 in No. 101.

Ras Tafari to Sir E. Drummond.

Que la paix soit avec vous!

(Traduction.)

J'AI l'honneur de vous faire parvenir ci-joint copies des notes et lettres que les Gouvernements d'Angleterre et d'Italie nous ont communiquées et par lesquelles ils se sont entendus à notre insu au sujet de leurs intérêts en Éthiopie, et des lettres que nous leur avons adressées en réponse, ainsi que la protestation que nous adressons aux honorables États, membres de la Société des Nations, faisant connaître que nous n'acceptons pas cet accord.

Je vous prie, en conséquence, de bien vouloir les communiquer aux États susmentionnés afin que cette question soit examinée.

Écrit dans la Ville d'Addis-Ababa, le 12 Senié 1918, an de grâce (19 juin 1926).

(Sceau et signature.)

TAFFARI MAKONNEN,

Héritier du Trône d'Éthiopie.

Enclosure 2 in No. 101.

Ras Tafari to Members of the League of Nations.

NOTRE Gouvernement a reçu récemment des Gouvernements britannique et italien une note rédigée dans les mêmes termes nous faisant connaître qu'un accord est intervenu entre ces deux Gouvernements, en vertu duquel ils s'assurent un appui mutuel pour parvenir, le premier à être chargé de l'aménagement des eaux de notre lac Tsana, le second à construire un chemin de fer à travers notre Empire.

Cet accord conclu en dehors de nous et à notre insu et la démarche collective de ces deux Gouvernements nous le notifiant, nous ont profondément émus.

En effet, en premier lieu, quand nous avons été admis dans la Société des Nations, on nous a dit que toutes les nations devaient y être sur le même pied, et que leur indépendance devait être respectée par tous, puisque le but de la Société est de maintenir et d'organiser la paix entre les hommes conformément à la volonté de Dieu.

On ne nous avait pas dit que quelques-uns des membres de la Société pourraient s'entendre séparément pour imposer à un autre membre leur manière de voir, même si celui-ci ne la jugeait pas compatible avec ses intérêts nationaux.

En deuxième lieu, un des sujets visés dans cet accord avait déjà fait l'objet de conversations entre le Gouvernement britannique et le nôtre, et si ces conversations n'avaient pas encore abouti, c'est pour des raisons qui se sont imposées à notre esprit, mais aucune réponse définitive n'a jamais été donnée par nous.

En se mettant donc d'accord entre eux pour se prêter un appui réciproque, en ce qui concerne ces sujets, et en nous notifiant collectivement cet accord, nous ne pouvons nous défendre de penser que ces deux Gouvernements veulent exercer sur nous une pression pour nous amener à céder à leurs demandes de façon prématurée et sans nous laisser le temps de réfléchir et de tenir compte des convenances de notre peuple.

Notre peuple est désireux de bien faire et nous avons la ferme volonté de le diriger dans la voie des améliorations et du progrès, mais, au cours de son histoire, il n'a guère connu, parmi les étrangers, que ceux qui voulaient s'emparer de son territoire et attenter à son indépendance. Avec l'aide de Dieu et grâce à la bravoure de nos soldats, nous avons pu, toujours et malgré tout, rester libres et fiers sur nos montagnes.

Il nous faut donc agir avec prudence quand il s'agit de faire admettre à notre pays que les étrangers, qui demandent à s'installer, pour des buts économiques, chez nous ou sur nos frontières limitrophes de leurs possessions, n'ont réellement aucune arrière-pensée politique, et nous ne savons pas si des accords et des démarches collectives, comme ceux dont il s'agit, constituent le meilleur moyen de le convaincre.

Il ne faut pas perdre de vue, non plus, que nous ne sommes venus que récemment à la civilisation moderne et que notre passé, s'il est plein de gloire, ne nous préparait pas à une adaptation immédiate à des choses souvent tout à fait nouvelles pour nous. La nature elle-même n'a jamais procédé par bonds et quel est le pays qui s'est transformé du jour au lendemain?

Avec notre bonne volonté certaine, si on nous en laisse le temps, et en nous inspirant des conseils amicaux des pays à qui leur situation géographique a permis de nous devancer dans le chemin, nous pouvons obtenir des améliorations progressives et constantes qui feront l'Éthiopie grande dans l'avenir comme elle l'a toujours été jusqu'ici. Mais en allant trop vite il y a à craindre des accidents.

Que les membres de la Société nous disent s'il convient d'employer vis-à-vis de nous des moyens de pression qu'eux-mêmes n'accepteraient sans doute pas!

Nous avons l'honneur de communiquer à tous les honorables États, membres de la Société des Nations, les notes que nous avons reçues, afin qu'ils se rendent compte si elles sont compatibles avec l'indépendance de notre pays, lorsqu'il est dit, notamment, qu'une partie de notre Empire sera réservée à l'influence économique d'une Puissance déterminée. Nous ne pouvons pas ignorer que l'influence économique et l'influence politique sont deux sœurs étroitement jointes l'une à l'autre et nous devons protester fermement contre un accord qui n'est pas en concordance, dans notre idée, avec les principes mêmes de la Société des Nations.

L'Héritier du Trône d'Éthiopie,
TAFFARI MAKONNEN.

Addis-Ababa, le 12 Senié 1918, an de grâce
(19 juin 1926).

[15702]

Enclosure 3 in No 101.

Acting Secretary-General, League of Nations, to Ras Taffari.

Monseigneur,

Genève, le 22 juillet 1926.
PAR une communication en date du 12 Senié 1918 (19 juin 1926), votre Altesse Impériale et Royale a bien voulu me faire parvenir, avec des traductions en langue française, une note accompagnée de copies des documents et lettres échangés entre le Gouvernement Impérial et Royal d'Éthiopie, d'une part, et les Gouvernements de l'Empire britannique et de l'Italie, d'autre part, concernant un accord qui serait intervenu récemment entre ces Puissances.

L'objet de la communication de votre Altesse Impériale et Royale étant de faire porter le contenu de ces divers documents à la connaissance des États membres de la Société des Nations, j'ai, en conséquence, pris toutes dispositions nécessaires à cet effet.

J'ai, de plus, fait de cette communication l'objet d'une transmission spéciale aux Gouvernements britannique et italien directement intéressés. Au cas où ces Gouvernements jugeraient opportun de me faire parvenir des observations sur le contenu de cette communication, je ne manquerais pas d'en faire part de même à votre Altesse Impériale et Royale.

Dans sa lettre, votre Altesse Impériale et Royale a bien voulu ajouter, d'autre part, qu'elle souhaiterait que, comme suite à la communication de ces documents aux États membres de la Société des Nations, la question dont il s'agit puisse être examinée. Votre Altesse Impériale et Royale n'ayant pas cru devoir indiquer la forme et la procédure selon lesquelles elle souhaiterait que cet examen eût lieu, j'ai l'honneur de la prier de vouloir bien me faire connaître s'il convient d'interpréter sa demande comme étant de voir inscrire cette question à l'ordre du jour de l'une des prochaines sessions du Conseil de la Société des Nations. Si le désir de votre Altesse Impériale et Royale était que la question figure à l'ordre du jour de la plus prochaine session du Conseil, celle-ci devant s'ouvrir à Genève, le 2 septembre 1926, je me permettrais d'attirer l'attention de votre Altesse Impériale et Royale sur l'opportunité qu'il y aurait à ce que toutes précisions utiles à cet égard me soient fournies par la voie télégraphique.

Agréez, &c.

Le Secrétaire-Général par intérim,
INAZO NITOBÉ.

[J 2080/19/1]

No. 102.

Question asked in the House of Commons, July 26, 1926.

Mr. Noel Buxton asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what advantages, if any, have been secured by His Majesty's Government for this country, other than the right to construct the Tsana barrage, in return for the concessions made to the Italian Government in Southern and Western Abyssinia?

Answer.

Mr. Locker-Lampson: His Majesty's Government were not seeking advantages for this country but the development of the water supply of the Sudan and Egypt, on which the future prosperity of those countries depends. The Tsana barrage is an essential element in this development, and the only object of the recently concluded agreement with Italy was to secure Italian support in subsequent negotiations with the Abyssinian Government, who alone can authorise the construction of the Tsana barrage. We shall, I hope, be able to show the Abyssinian Government that this work will serve the interests of Abyssinia as well as of the Sudan and Egypt.

Colonel Day: May I ask whether any subsequent agreement has been come to with the Italian Government and our representative in Rome?

Mr. Locker-Lampson: The only agreement has already been made public.

Captain Benn: Does the agreement with Italy in reference to this matter go beyond the terms of the 1906 treaty?

Mr. Locker-Lampson: No, certainly not.

No. 103.

[J 2049/19/1]

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 200.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, July 30, 1926.

MY immediately following telegram contains text of reply which I propose to return to a letter from League of Nations transmitting Abyssinian protest in regard to Anglo-Italian exchange of notes. I assume that you will have seen above letter and protest, which have appeared in the press. From third paragraph of reply of Acting Secretary-General to Ras Taffari, dated 22nd July, it appears that observations of British and Italian Governments on Abyssinian note are expected. It is undesirable that such vaguely worded and misleading charges should remain unanswered, and you should invite the concurrence of the Italian Government in the reply which I propose to return.

I welcome the opportunity of discussion in the Council to dissipate gross misrepresentation which has accompanied, and indeed preceded, publication of the Anglo-Italian notes. I should hope to convince Council without difficulty of the perfect propriety of the British and Italian attitude towards Abyssinia and of the essential importance of the Lake Tsana scheme to the welfare of the population of Egypt and the Sudan.

I shall have to reply to Parliamentary questions on this subject on Monday, and shall, therefore, be glad to learn views of Italian Government by then.

No. 104.

[J 2118/19/1]

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 2.)

(No. 169.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Rome, August 1, 1926.

YOUR telegram No. 200.

Signor Mussolini agrees and concurs in the text of reply.

No. 105.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 2.)

(No. 170.)

(Telegraphic.)

Rome, August 1, 1926.

MY telegram No. 169.

Signor Mussolini said that he did not himself propose to return any answer to League of Nations. But when I suggested that this would be a mistake he agreed to reconsider the question and will probably send a brief acknowledgment. I found his Excellency and Signor Grandi both extremely irritated over terms of Abyssinian note to the League, which bore the same date as friendly private letter from Ras Taffari to Signor Mussolini. They consider phrase regarding Abyssinia remaining proud and free on their native mountains as direct allusion to Adowa. I gather that Signor Mussolini first thought of demanding withdrawal of Abyssinian note, but he has eventually confined himself to a sharp remonstrance at Addis Ababa. His Excellency showed great bitterness towards the French, to whose inspiration he attributed the Abyssinian move.

No. 106.

[J 2049/19/1]

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 1068.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 2, 1926.

IN confirmation of my telegram No. 201 of the 30th July, I transmit to your Excellency herewith a copy of a letter which I have received from the Acting Secretary-General of the League of Nations,* forwarding a protest addressed to Sir Eric Drummond by the Abyssinian Government in regard to the notes exchanged by you and M. Mussolini in December of last year.

* League of Nations, July 22.

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[15702]

2. It is to be inferred from the third paragraph of the reply of the Acting Secretary-General to Ras Tafari, dated the 22nd July, that the observations of the British and Italian Governments are expected on the Abyssinian note. It appears to me undesirable that the vaguely worded and misleading charges which it contains should remain unanswered, and I have accordingly caused to be prepared the accompanying draft letter,* in the terms of which I request that you will invite the concurrence of the Italian Government.

3. As stated in this draft letter, I welcome the opportunity which will be afforded by a discussion of the Abyssinian protest in the Council of the League to dissipate the gross misrepresentation which has accompanied, and, indeed, preceded the publication of the Anglo-Italian notes. I should hope to convince the Council, without difficulty, of the perfect propriety of the British and Italian attitude towards Abyssinia, and of the essential importance of the Lake Tsana scheme to the welfare of the populations of Egypt and the Sudan.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 2128/19/1]

No. 107.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 3.)

(No. 625.)

Sir,

Rome, July 30, 1926.

IN paragraph 4 of the despatch No. 143, Confidential, of the 12th ultimo from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa regarding the Lake Tsana Agreement, the following passage occurs:—

"M. Gaussen's other causes for complaint seemed to be inspired by suspicion and dislike of Italy and jealousy of our joining with Italy. He holds, and in this I regret to report I agree with him, that by our action we have considerably diminished our chances of obtaining the Tsana concession. In this I hope I may be wrong, but it seems to me that if ever the Italian Colonial Office wished to put a spoke in our wheel, they have, by having had everything their own way in this matter, succeeded admirably in their task."

2. The policy of approaching the Italian Government in the first instance was recommended to you by the unofficial Foreign Office committee composed of Mr. Ashley, of the Board of Trade; Sir James Currie, Director of the Empire Cotton-growing Corporation; Mr. Bentinck, His Majesty's Minister in Abyssinia, and Mr. Murray. You adopted it, and my instructions were framed accordingly. I have been reviewing the earlier history of my negotiations with the Italian Government to see if Mr. Bentinck's statement that the Italian Colonial Office "had everything their own way in this matter" can be justified by the facts of the case, as otherwise it might create a false impression. I have come to the conclusion that it must be based on a misapprehension.

3. In my negotiations with the Italian Government, during part of which I had the valued assistance of Mr. McGregor, it was clear that the Italian Ministry for the Colonies were opposed in principle to the whole agreement. They feared that it might affect the relations between Italy, and especially her Eritrean colony, with the Abyssinian authorities and local chiefs. The course of subsequent events has shown that their misgivings were not altogether unjustified. It was always to be foreseen that the inclusion in the British note to the Abyssinian Government of the preamble showing that the original proposal came from the Italian Government would be likely to divert a considerable share of odium upon the Italians, but I was not prepared for the extent to which this has been realised. Finally, greatly owing to the assistance given to me by Senator Contarini, then Secretary-General of the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the objections of the Italian Ministry for the Colonies were overcome and the agreement was duly signed.

4. The concessions made to the Italian Ministry for the Colonies were the following:—

- (i.) That the British note should contain some allusion to the Tripartite Agreement of 1906, but this was a point upon which Senator Contarini also insisted.

* Not printed.

- (ii.) A slight alteration of phrase in the British note owing to the restricted meaning of the Italian word "domestico."
- (iii.) A final phrase in the Italian note to render the agreement as palatable as possible to the Abyssinians by holding out hopes to them that they would obtain some benefit from it.

After some discussion, you informed me in your despatch No. 1895 of the 10th December of last year that you shared my view that, except on the ground of prolixity, the Italian note might be regarded as containing nothing that was seriously objectionable now that the one sentence to which I had taken exception had been dropped. Moreover, you modified the final paragraph of the British note to obtain conformity, and you went even further than the Italians had suggested in order to conciliate Abyssinian susceptibilities.

- (iv.) That His Majesty's Government should give an assurance that they neither desired nor intended to construct works on the Wady Shebeli. As such an idea had never occurred to us there was no difficulty in granting this concession.

5. So far as I can ascertain the above are the only points on which the Italian Ministry of the Colonies were given their own way, and they do not seem to affect the agreement seriously.

6. The preference shown by the Italian Government for the text of the original notes as against those proposed by the two Ministers at Addis Ababa was shared by both the Italian Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Colonies and by Signor Mussolini. But the proposed new British note and the Italian reply did not conform to each other. Moreover, the Italians both here and at Addis Ababa had made a mental reservation that we were to be bound by the original notes, and this entailed the serious drawback that the whole agreement would not be comprised in the one exchange of notes.

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM.

[J 2049/19/1]

No. 108.

Foreign Office to Acting Secretary-General of the League of Nations.

Foreign Office, August 3, 1926.

Sir,

I AM directed by His Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd July, with which you were good enough to transmit copies of the letter addressed to Sir Eric Drummond by His Imperial Highness Ras Tafari, together with a protest in regard to the notes exchanged between the British and Italian Governments in December 1925 under-taking to afford each other mutual support when the consent of the Abyssinian Government is sought for the construction in Abyssinia of certain public works defined in the notes.

2. His Majesty's Government regret that, in spite of the assurances conveyed to the Abyssinian Government by the British and Italian Ministers at Addis Ababa when communicating the text of the Anglo-Italian notes, their purport should have been misconstrued and intentions attributed to the British and Italian Governments which they have never entertained. The Abyssinian protest is so worded as to imply that the British and Italian Governments have entered into an agreement to impose their wishes on a fellow member of the League even if against the latter's interests. Members of the League are asked to state whether it is right that pressure should thus be exerted on Abyssinia which they would, doubtless, repudiate if applied to them.

3. There is nothing in the Anglo-Italian notes to suggest coercion or the exercise of pressure on the Abyssinian Government. Sir Austen Chamberlain has stated in Parliament that the agreement was certainly not to be used and could not be used for the purpose of coercing the Abyssinian Government. He believed the agreement to be in the interests of all three parties, but added that, of course, the Abyssinian Government had a perfect right to judge of what was in the interests of Abyssinia. His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires was instructed by telegraph on the 14th July to bring these statements to the knowledge of Ras Tafari.

4. As to the suggestion that the British and Italian Governments are trying to force the Abyssinian Government to yield to their requests in a hurry and without

being afforded time for reflection and study of the requirements of the Abyssinian people, I am to point out that in notes exchanged between the British Minister in Addis Ababa and the Abyssinian Government on the 18th March, 1902, the Emperor Menelik confirmed an oral undertaking, given some days previously, "that there is to be no interference with the waters of the Blue Nile and Lake Tsana except in consultation with His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of the Sudan; that in the case of any such interference, all other conditions being equal, preference will be given to the proposals of His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of the Sudan; and that His Majesty the Emperor Menelik has no intention of giving any concession with regard to the Blue Nile and Lake Tsana except to His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of the Sudan or one of their subjects." Since the date of this undertaking, which shows that twenty-four years ago the Emperor Menelik contemplated the construction by the British Government of a barrage at Lake Tsana, His Majesty's Government have on several occasions made specific proposals in regard to this work, the full effect of which it is now possible to foretell as the result of the detailed observations which have been carried out by scientific missions despatched to the Lake with the consent and assistance of the Abyssinian Government. In these circumstances His Majesty's Government feel that they cannot fairly be charged with proceeding in regard to Lake Tsana with undue precipitancy.

5. In the concluding paragraph of their protest the Abyssinian Government enquire whether the Anglo-Italian notes can be regarded as compatible with the independence of Abyssinia, especially when those notes state that a portion of Abyssinia will be "reserved" to the economic influence of a particular Power. Sir Austen Chamberlain desires to emphasise that the Anglo-Italian notes do not "reserve" any part of Abyssinia to Italian economic influence. His Britannic Majesty's Government, so far as they are concerned and under certain conditions, "recognise an exclusive Italian economic influence in the west of Abyssinia and in the whole territory to be crossed by the above-mentioned railway" (joining Eritrea and Italian Somiland). This recognition cannot affect the rights of third parties or bind the Government of Abyssinia. It imposes no obligation on anyone except the British Government who in return for the Italian undertakings in regard to Lake Tsana engage not to compete or support competition with Italian enterprise in the region specified.

6. Sir Austen Chamberlain will be happy to repeat these explanations and assurances to Abyssinia in the presence of the Council at its next meeting when it takes into consideration the note addressed to you by the Government of Abyssinia.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

No. 109.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Maclean (Addis Ababa).

(No. 80.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, August 3, 1926.

ANGLO-ITALIAN Agreement was raised in debate in House of Commons last night, during course of which particular attention was paid to Abyssinian protest addressed to League of Nations on 19th June. This protest has been published and widely commented on in press.

In my reply I alluded to assurances given by Emperor Menelik to Sir John Harrington in 1902, and said that I was anxious to secure that exterior opposition should not intervene to prevent a friendly arrangement, such as these assurances authorised us to expect in dealing with the Abyssinian Government. I explained delay in communication to Abyssinian Government of actual text of notes, substance of which I pointed out had been communicated to them in January. In alluding to negotiations with the French I said that they were entirely satisfied by explanations we had given as regards our part in the agreement, and that they had published a communiqué in the French press on 5th July which showed that they were equally satisfied by explanations which they had received from the Italian Government. I repeated assurances contained in my telegram No. 76 of 14th July, and said that you had been instructed to convey them to Ras Tafari. Effect of agreement was to secure us against Italian opposition to grant by Abyssinia of Tsana concession to

Sudan Government and to protect Italy against opposition from us for concession for construction of Eritrea-Somaliland Railway. One railway foreseen in Tripartite Agreement of 1906 had already been constructed and had contributed to development and prosperity of Abyssinia. Works contemplated by Italians and ourselves would be equally to advantage of Abyssinia and would not threaten her independence or integrity.

Referring to use of word "exclusive," in connection with Italian economic interests, I said that all it means is that we undertake not to support in opposition to Italy or the Italian concessionaire the claims of British concession hunters.

I repudiated the suggestion made in the course of debate that some pretext might be used to exclude Abyssinia from the League on the ground that she had failed to fulfil her obligations in respect of the slave trade. I said that I hoped that she would remain a member of the League, and believed that even if there be things which we may hope to see altered in her internal economy and in the domestic side of society, it is probable, by giving her a welcome into the League and giving her the assurance which membership of the League gives, and by making her a party to the deliberations of the League, that we can best achieve those results. In conclusion, I read reply which is being returned to letter from League transmitting copy of Abyssinian protest. Text of this reply, in which Italian Government concur, is contained in my immediately following telegram.

No. 110.

[J 2094/19/1]

Record of Meeting to discuss the Method of Negotiations with Abyssinian Government for the Lake Tsana Concession.

A MEETING was held at the Foreign Office on the 21st July, at which Mr. C. H. Bentinck, Sir George Schuster, Sir James Currie, Mr. Hodson, Mr. Murray and Mr. Ronald were present, to discuss the opening of negotiations with the Abyssinian Government for the Lake Tsana Concession.

Sir George Schuster suggested, and, after some discussion, it was generally agreed, that it would probably be best if, in opening these negotiations, Mr. Bentinck were to take as a starting-point the proposals made by Ras Tafari in his letter to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald of the 26th July, 1924. Those proposals contemplated that the construction of the reservoir would be undertaken by the Ethiopian Government, who, as a preliminary, would appoint a capable engineer to examine what works were required on Lake Tsana and their cost; the Ethiopian Government would then compute the value of the works to the Sudan, and, on that basis, fix the annual rent to be paid by the Sudan Government. The Ethiopian Government are now, or shortly will be, in possession of a report by a Swiss engineer appointed by them, M. Max Sorg. Assuming that this report will not be unfavourable to His Majesty's Government, the first stage in the negotiations will, according to the Ras' proposal, consist in the computation of the amount to be paid annually by the Sudan Government for the renting of waters made available by the dam and the fixation of the period of validity of the agreement, and "any other question in connection therewith." Negotiations can, therefore, reasonably be opened by asking the Ras what he has now to propose in accordance with his letter to Mr. MacDonald.

It can be pointed out to the Abyssinian Government that their proposal themselves to build the dam is hardly in accordance with the notes exchanged on the 18th March, 1902, between Sir J. Harrington and M. Alfred Ilg (duly authorised thereto by the Emperor Menelik), whereby His Majesty promised that, "Il n'y aura aucune intervention pour les eaux du Nil Bleu et du Lac Tsana excepté en consultation avec le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté britannique et le Gouvernement du Soudan; qu'en cas d'une telle intervention, toutes les autres conditions étant égales, préférence va être donnée aux propositions du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté britannique et du Gouvernement du Soudan; et que Sa Majesté l'Empereur Ménélik n'a aucune intention de donner une concession regardant le Nil Bleu et le Lac Tsana à d'autres qu'au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté britannique et au Gouvernement du Soudan ou à un de leurs sujets."

None the less, His Majesty's Government would be quite ready, in spite of this solemn and clear undertaking, to go a long way to meet the wish of the Abyssinian Government to have an interest in the reservoir, provided that His Majesty's

Government has the substantial power to ensure that the construction is carried out on sound engineering lines. The Abyssinian wishes might be met by constituting an Anglo-Abyssinian company on the board, of which there would be one or two Abyssinian directors. This company would be given a concession to construct the reservoir and to lease the water stored to the Sudan Government for a term of years renewable for further periods. The concession might in this respect follow the general lines of the French railway concession, which, it can be emphasised, has never menaced Abyssinian sovereignty or independence. Mr. Bentinck will be able to point to the very large number of foreign-owned public utility undertakings in other countries, particularly South America, e.g., the Anglo-Argentine Trams, São Paulo Railway Company, Barcelona Traction, North Railway of Spain (French), &c., to illustrate the fact that a public utility undertaking like the Tsana reservoir has no political implications of which the Abyssinians need be afraid. On the other hand, if the report of M. Max Sorg is unfavourable to our scheme and the Abyssinians refuse on this ground to consider our proposals, we can claim that the question should be submitted to technical arbitration. We made it clear in 1924 that His Majesty's Government would require to be satisfied as to the competence of the engineer appointed by the Abyssinian Government. The latter, however, selected him without any reference to us, and if he now turns down the carefully-studied report of Messrs. Graham and Black, we shall have every ground for doubting his capacity.

The advisability of associating some financial expert with Mr. Bentinck in the early stages of the negotiations was considered. It was generally agreed that Mr. Bentinck alone would have to be the channel of approach to the Abyssinian Government in the opening stages of the negotiations.

Sir George Schuster pointed out that the arrangements as regards finance would require time, and the Sudan Government would not be in a position to stake large sums of money until such arrangements had been concluded. The question of bringing the Egyptians into a share at least in the first years must also be considered. In order to give time for consideration of these arrangements, Mr. Bentinck ought to endeavour to secure an option to build, for which the Sudan Government would be prepared to pay a reasonable sum, say, up to £E. 10,000 a year, on the lines of the draft treaty proposed by Colonel Doughty Wylie to the Abyssinian Government in 1914.

It was generally agreed that, at least in the first instance, the negotiations should be regarded as a self-contained commercial proposition, and that no extraneous make-weight, such as the cession of Zeila, should be introduced. This could only be considered in the event of total failure to make progress on any other lines, and, if brought in at all, would best be reserved for the last moment to clinch an agreement.

It was felt that, unless something unforeseen took place, Mr. Bentinck should open the negotiations on his return to Addis Ababa. The Abyssinians were expecting this; there were indications that opposition to the scheme in the country, apart from the capital, was no longer as vigorous as it had been; and, finally, French and Italian hostility having been removed at considerable trouble and expense, it would be a mistake to allow the situation thus brought about to deteriorate through inaction on our part. Mr. Bentinck's guiding principle should be gentle, but steady and slowly increasing, pressure. There was some reason to believe that the Abyssinians already realised that ultimately they would have to come to terms with us, and no effort should be spared to intensify this impression.

On Sir G. Schuster's enquiring whether there was any means of exerting effective pressure in the event of deliberate Abyssinian recalcitrance, it was pointed out that force was impossible, and the threat of force therefore a dangerous bluff. On the other hand, publicity was a potent weapon with Ras Tafari, though the Empress and her other advisers were more or less impervious to European criticism.

It was felt that, until preliminary negotiations on these lines had taken place, it would be premature to decide whether the concession should be asked for in the name of His Majesty's Government or the Sudan Government, or of a commercial concern with an Anglo-Abyssinian board of directors and capital. Sir George Schuster said that the Sudan Government had no strong views on the point, and did not mind whether the concession was given in the name of one or the other; their sole preoccupation was that they should be permitted to satisfy themselves that the work was properly carried out and calculated to ensure the attainment of the objects with which the dam was to be constructed, and that they did not have to pay too much for it.

Mr. Murray raised the question of the period of validity of the lease. He suggested that the terms of the concession might with advantage follow as closely as possible that granted to the Addis Ababa-Jibuti Railway, which is valid for ninety-nine years from the date the works are completed; at the expiration of that period, the railway, rolling-stock, &c., become the property of the Abyssinian and Jibuti Governments, no provision being made for renewal or extension of the concession.

Sir George Schuster thought that, in order to meet Abyssinian susceptibilities, it might be justifiable not to stipulate for a specific statement that the concession was perpetual, but to be content with an agreement for a period of years subject to a provision for renewal provided that the working of the reservoir had been satisfactory. The proviso for renewal must, however, be such that for all practical purposes there is no risk of early termination of the concession.

It was agreed that the proposal to proceed on the above lines should be discussed at a further meeting with Lord Lloyd.

Foreign Office, August 4, 1926.

No. 111.

[J 2162/19/1]

The Marquess of Crewe to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 5.)

(No. 1455.)

Paris, August 4, 1926.

Sir,

WITH a view to carrying out the instructions contained in your despatch No. 2107 of the 23rd ultimo, Mr. Phipps this morning enquired of M. Berthelot, who has returned from a few days' leave, whether the French Government were now ready to discuss the conditions under which they would be prepared to give a favourable reply to the request which I addressed to them on the 18th January last (see my despatch No. 127 of the 20th January) for their support in respect of the British Tsana negotiations with the Abyssinian Government.

2. M. Berthelot stated, in reply, that he had now received assurances from the Italian Ambassador in Paris that (1) the Italian requirements in Abyssinia would in no way interfere with French interests, (2) that the policy of the open door would continue in Abyssinia, and (3) that the independence and integrity of Abyssinia would be maintained.

3. In these circumstances M. Berthelot had informed Baron Avvezana that instructions would be sent to the French representative at Addis Ababa to maintain a friendly and sympathetic neutrality in regard to Anglo-Italian desiderata in Abyssinia. These instructions, M. Berthelot said, had now been sent. He informed Mr. Phipps, however, in strict confidence, that it must be admitted that the French Government did not view the British Tsana requirements and those of the Italians in the same light. The former were perfectly fair and square requirements which would not in any way injure Abyssinia, and would, indeed, probably be of direct benefit to her; they had, moreover, been brought to the notice of the Abyssinian Government so far back as during the reign of the Emperor Menelik. The Italian requirements, however, were as the Abyssinians themselves felt, the thin end of the wedge which the Italians hoped sooner or later to insert into Abyssinian sovereignty. However, the above-mentioned instructions had nevertheless been sent to M. Gaussen, who could be relied on to act upon them loyally.

4. Mr. Phipps enquired whether the French Government would now actually support the representations which His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa had made to the Abyssinian Government as well as those which had been made by the Italian representative. M. Berthelot replied that the French Government, whilst they laid down no conditions in return for the attitude which they had now adopted in regard to the matter at issue, felt averse from addressing an official communication to the Abyssinian Government in support of the representations made by the British and Italian representatives at Addis Ababa. M. Berthelot, however, declared that he would at once instruct M. Gaussen by telegraph to inform the Abyssinian Government that the French Government did not consider that the requirements of His Majesty's Government in regard to Tsana could in any way be detrimental to the interests of Abyssinia. These instructions will be treated very confidentially. Mr. Phipps enquired whether M. Gaussen could be relied upon faithfully to carry out his instructions in

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regard to the Italian requests and to display friendly and sympathetic neutrality thereto, and M. Berthelot replied in a decided affirmative. M. Berthelot pointed out that the French Government were now in effect making, or about to make, concessions to Italy in regard to Abyssinia, Tangier and Tunis without asking for anything in return.

5. Finally, M. Berthelot referred briefly to M. Lagarde, whom he described as a madman, who was, however, quite independent of the French Government. M. Lagarde, he observed, was not, as he had sometimes been described, the representative on the League of Nations of the Abyssinian Government. He was merely one of their advisers, in which capacity he received pay from them. M. Berthelot said that if it were possible a hint might be dropped to M. Lagarde to behave with due circumspection at Geneva in the matter. In any case the French delegation would display the same friendly and sympathetic neutrality thereto as the French representative at Addis Ababa.

I have, &c.
(For the Ambassador),
ERIC PHIPPS.

[J 2206/19/1]

No. 112.

Mr. Wingfield to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 9.)

(No. 666.)

Sir,

Rome, August 6, 1926.

I WENT to the Palazzo Chigi this afternoon at the request of Signor Guariglia, the official who deals particularly with Abyssinian affairs, and was there handed by him the *note verbale*, a translation of which I have the honour to enclose, covering a draft of the reply which the Italian Government propose to make to the Abyssinian communication to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations. Signor Guariglia said that as His Majesty's Government had asked for the assent of the Italian Government to the text of their recent note to the Acting Secretary-General of the League, the Italian Government also desired to secure British assent before they sent in their reply, a translation of which is also enclosed herein. He hoped, however, that it would be forthcoming as soon as possible, since it was undesirable that the despatch of the Italian note should be delayed too long.

2. In this connection I beg to draw your attention to the press summaries of this week and last week. The criticisms of Italian policy in Abyssinia in the French, and in some organs of the British press are causing irritation, and this morning's "Messaggero," whilst foreshadowing an early Italian reply to the Abyssinian note, draws attention to an article in the "Manchester Guardian" as an example of the "obstinate and prejudiced attitude of anti-Fascism" assumed by that newspaper.

3. I venture to request a telegraphic reply to the request of the Italian Government for your assent to the terms of their note.

I have, &c.
C. J. WINGFIELD,
Chargé d'Affaires.

Enclosure 1 in No. 112.

Pro-memoria.

(Translation.)

THE Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs thank His Britannic Majesty's Embassy for having communicated to them the reply which the British Government proposed to make to the letter in which the Council of the League of Nations transmitted to them the Abyssinian protest against the exchange of notes between Italy and Great Britain relative to Lake Tsana and other questions.

The Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs have the honour to inform the British Embassy that the Royal Government agree with the terms of the proposed reply,

attached to the memorandum by the Embassy of the 31st July, and for their part propose to send the Council of the League a communication, copy of which is enclosed herewith, and with the terms of which they are confident that the British Government will concur.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs,
Rome, August 6, 1926.

Enclosure 2 in No. 112.

Draft Italian Note to the Council of the League of Nations.

(Translation.)
Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
THE Chief of the Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs directs me to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 22nd July last, in which you were so good as to transmit a copy of the letter, with the relative enclosures, which His Imperial Highness Ras Tafari Makonnen has directed to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, relative to the notes exchanged in December 1925 between the Italian Government and the British Government, with the object of reciprocally supporting each other in requesting from the Abyssinian Government the construction of certain public works in Ethiopia.

The Royal Government regrets to be obliged to take note that the tenor of the note directed by His Imperial Highness Ras Tafari Makonnen to the members of the League of Nations shows that the Abyssinian Government has not clearly understood the text or the spirit of the understanding reached between the Italian and British Governments. This has the more surprised the Royal Government, inasmuch as some time ago the Italian representative at Addis Ababa had fully explained to the Abyssinian Government the scope and objects of the above-mentioned notes, making it quite clear to them that these notes constituted only an understanding with regard to procedure arrived at between the Italian and British Governments for the purpose of co-ordinating certain of their interests of an economic nature, the practical realisation of which is, however, evidently subordinated to the decisions of the Abyssinian Government and to the recognition on the part of the latter that such interests are in harmony with those of Ethiopia and promote the economic and civil progress of the country.

It was as a sequel to these declarations that on the 19th June last His Imperial Highness Ras Tafari forwarded to the Italian Minister in Addis Ababa a letter in which he thanked the Chief of the Italian Government for the assurances given to him, and affirmed that he had never doubted Italian sentiments of friendship and Italy's will to respect the independence of Ethiopia.

The Italian Government considers that neither in the text nor in the spirit of the notes in question is there anything which could authorise the Abyssinian Government to express fears with regard to hasty and coercive pressure which the Italian and British Governments are supposed to have the intention of exercising on the Abyssinian Government, and the friendly and explicit assurances already given to the Abyssinian Government on this subject should have sufficed to make the latter understand the absurdity of such fears.

So far as more particularly concerns the recognition on the part of the British Government of the exclusive character of Italian economic influence in certain regions of Ethiopia, it is obvious that this constitutes an undertaking which exists solely between the two Governments of Italy and Great Britain, but cannot bind the liberty of decision of the Abyssinian Government nor the eventual action of third parties.

The question is one of a guarantee of an economic nature obtained for Italian enterprises against British enterprises, thus avoiding a competition which might hinder the success of such undertakings, and also prove injurious to the development of the local resources which Ethiopia may be interested in promoting and favouring.

I have, &c.

[15702]

[J 2162/19/1]

No. 113.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Maclean (Addis Ababa).

(No. 88.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, August 9, 1926.

MY despatch No. 265 of 24th July: Lake Tsana.

French Government have informed His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris that they have instructed your French colleague to maintain a friendly and sympathetic neutrality in regard to Anglo-Italian desiderata in Abyssinia and to inform the Abyssinian Government very confidentially that the French Government do not consider that the requirements of His Majesty's Government in regard to Lake Tsana could be in any way detrimental to Abyssinian interests.

[J 2162/19/1]

No. 114.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).

(No. 2265.)

My Lord Marquess,

Foreign Office, August 10, 1926.

I HAVE learnt with great satisfaction from your Lordship's despatch No. 1455 of the 4th instant that the French Government have instructed their representative at Addis Ababa to maintain a friendly and sympathetic neutrality towards Anglo-Italian desiderata in Abyssinia, and to inform the Government of that country that they do not consider that the requirements of His Majesty's Government in regard to Lake Tsana could be in any way detrimental to Abyssinian interests.

2. I shall be glad if you will take an early opportunity of conveying verbally to the French Government an expression of my warm thanks for the assistance they have been kind enough to promise. A written reply would of course have been preferable, but, as this was rendered difficult in that a written reply to you might have entailed a written reply to the Italian Ambassador, I am content to rest satisfied with M. Berthelot's verbal promises. On the other hand, as you are aware, Parliament has taken and continues to take a lively interest in Abyssinian affairs and I am at present collecting documents for inclusion in a White Paper which I have promised to lay shortly. A short note from the French Government would be of great value to complete such a publication, but, if they feel unable to go so far as this, I should like to secure their permission to state in Parliament that the instructions in question have been sent to M. Gaussen. This being so, a member of your staff might explain the situation informally at the Quai d'Orsay, and, if he cannot induce them to furnish a written confirmation of M. Berthelot's promises, he might at any rate press that I be given leave to state the facts in Parliament.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 2094/19/1]

No. 115.

Foreign Office to Board of Trade.

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 10, 1926.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to transmit to you, for the consideration of the President of the Board of Trade, the accompanying record* of a meeting held at the Foreign Office on the 21st ultimo to discuss the method in which negotiations with the Abyssinian Government for the Lake Tsana concession might best be opened and the most favourable moment for their initiation.

2. The opportunity has been taken of consulting His Majesty's High Commissioner for Egypt, who is at present in this country. Lord Lloyd agrees generally with the suggestions contained in the enclosure to this letter, but is of opinion that any time-limit on the concession is undesirable.

3. Subject to this and to any observations which Sir P. Cunliffe-Lister may desire to make, Sir Austen Chamberlain proposes to instruct Mr. Bentinck to approach the Abyssinian Government on the lines suggested on his return to Addis Ababa towards the end of November.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

* No. 110.

[J 2230/19/1]

No. 116.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 11.)

(No. 169.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, July 16, 1926.

I HAVE the honour to report that an Abyssinian mission to the League of Nations left Addis Ababa on the 9th instant. It was composed of Dejazmatch Getatcho, Kantiba Gabru (see "Personalities," chapter 1 of the annual report for 1925 from this Legation) and Ato Tesfai Tagayne, an interpreter.

2. The personnel of this mission is somewhat undistinguished, apparently for the reason that other more suitable persons, including the Dejazmatch Gabre Sillassie, when approached, refused to go.

3. It is rumoured that Bilata Heroui will also shortly proceed to Europe on a mission for Ras Tafari, the exact object of which is as yet unknown to me.

I have, &c.

G. T. MACLEAN.

No. 117.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Wingfield (Rome).

(No. 219.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, August 11, 1926.

YOUR despatch No. 666 of the 6th August: Italian reply to League letter about Lake Tsana Agreement.

His Majesty's Government concur.

[J 2264/19/1]

No. 118.

Memorandum communicated by M. Rosso, Italian Embassy, August 13, 1926.

HERR SCHUBERT, of the German Foreign Office, has expressed to the Italian Ambassador in Berlin the desire of the German Government to receive from the Italian Government a written assurance with regard to the Anglo-Italian agreement for Abyssinia chiefly to the effect that the recognition of an exclusive Italian economic influence in the west of Ethiopia would not impair the rights deriving to Germany from the Treaty of 1905 with Abyssinia, which is still in force and which contains the clause of the most favourite nation.

The Italian Government are of opinion that such a request is not justified, inasmuch as they do not see any reason—in connection with an agreement which does not affect the Abyssinian sovereignty, neither concern third Powers—to give an indirect recognition to the German-Ethiopian Treaty of 1905, which does not concern Italy in any way.

However, considering that a refusal from their side could be misconstrued and possibly give rise, in Berlin as well as in Addis Ababa, to unwarranted suspicions, Signor Mussolini is not unwilling to authorise the Italian Ambassador in Berlin to give to the German Foreign Office a written assurance along the following lines:—

"The notes which have been exchanged, in December 1925, between the Italian and British Governments and which have been registered with the League of Nations, had the sole scope of co-ordinating certain economic interests of their two countries in Ethiopia and were inspired by the fullest respect of the integrity and sovereignty of the Abyssinian Government. Therefore the British-Italian agreement embodied in those notes do not in any way concern, and even less modify, the relations and the juridical situation existing between a third State and Ethiopia."

[J 2262/19/1]

No. 119.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 16.)

(No. 175.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, July 25, 1926.

I HAVE the honour to report that in the course of a conversation with Count Colli yesterday, he informed me that the incident with the Abyssinian Government was entirely closed. On Tuesday last he gave a luncheon party, at which were present Ras Taffari, Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis and Dejaz Gabre Sillassie, and from a conversation with them he gathered that His Highness was now on good terms with Hapta Giorgis, and that it was now Ras Kassa who was regarded as the chief of the Conservative reactionary party.

2. He also gave me to understand that Dejaz Gabre Sillassie, who had previously flatly refused to head the delegation to Geneva (see my despatch No. 169 of the 16th instant), was now inclined to withdraw his refusal, and might follow and take charge of it during the session of the League, although nothing had been definitely fixed so far.

3. Count Colli also informed me that he saw M. Gaussen on Monday last, and informed him of the telegram which he had received regarding the conversation between the Italian Ambassador and M. Briand. M. Gaussen, according to Count Colli, replied that everybody reported the details of any given conversation as it appeared to them, *i.e.*, inevitably with more or less personal bias, and that he for his part had received absolutely no instructions on the subject. I informed Count Colli that I had, in accordance with your instructions, communicated to Ras Taffari the substance of your replies in Parliament on the subject of the Anglo-Italian notes, which he agreed might help to dispel existing misapprehensions, but which, he said, only confirmed what he had been trying to impress on the Abyssinian Government from the time of his note conveying the text of the Italian note.

4. He also referred to the article in the "Courrier d'Ethiopie" (see my telegram No. 118 of the 19th instant), and was particularly incensed at the expression "bruits fendancieux" (rendered in my telegram as "wilfully misleading reports"). He had thought of requesting the journal to publish a reply, but finally decided that it might do more harm than good.

I have, &c.

G. T. MACLEAN.

[J 2323/19/1]

No. 120.

The Marquess of Crewe to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 20.)

(No. 1577.)

Sir,

Paris, August 19, 1926.

WITH a view to carrying out the instructions contained in your despatch No. 2265 of the 10th instant, Mr. Phipps conveyed to M. Berthelot yesterday afternoon an expression of your warm thanks for the assistance which the French Government had been kind enough to promise in the matter of Anglo-Italian desiderata in Abyssinia. Mr. Phipps explained that it would be useful for you to be able to insert in a coming White Paper a written communication from the French Government in regard to the instructions which they had sent to their representative at Addis Ababa in the matter. M. Berthelot took note of this request and promised to supply Mr. Phipps with the desired written communication at an early date.

I have, &c.

(For the Ambassador),

ERIC PHIPPS.

[J 2264/19/1]

No. 121

*Mr. Murray to M. Rosso.**Foreign Office, August 20, 1926.*

My dear Rosso,

WHEN you gave me that *aide-mémoire* about the written assurance which the German Government require of your Government in connection with the Tsana agreement, I was unaware that the counsellor of the German Embassy here had as long ago as last May made some enquiries here on the subject of the agreement. He was then informed that the arrangement did not and could not dispose of anybody else's rights, and that it merely defined the interests of Italy and Great Britain *vis-à-vis* one another.

In any case, so far as we are concerned, we have no objection to your Government giving the German Government the written assurance the text of which was embodied in your *aide-mémoire*.

Yours sincerely,

J. MURRAY.

[J 2356/19/1]

No. 122.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 23.)

(No. 180.)

HIS Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Addis Ababa presents his compliments to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of a note from Ras Taffari, dated the 30th July, respecting the Anglo-Italian agreement.

Addis Ababa, July 31, 1926.

Enclosure in No. 122.

*Ras Taffari to Mr. Maclean.**Addis Ababa, July 30, 1926.*

(After greetings.)

I HAVE received your letter of the 19th July, in which you were good enough to supply me with the summary of replies given to Parliament by Sir Austen Chamberlain regarding the Anglo-Italian agreement concerning Ethiopia. I have to thank you very much for your kind thought to let me know in writing that the British Government have no bad intention against Ethiopia.

(Seal of Ras Taffari.)

No. 123.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 25.)

(No. 130.)

(Telegraphic.)

YOUR telegram No. 81.

Abyssinian Government have received reply from League of Nations. I do not know for certain what it contains, but I have reason to think that further explanations are requested and also that Abyssinian Government are embarrassed as to reply to be made.

No. 124.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received August 26.)(No. 131.)
(Telegraphic.)*Addis Ababa, August 25, 1926.*

YOUR telegram No. 88.

French Minister and his secretary left to-day for Cairo for treatment, having been bitten by a dog suspected of madness. Legation will be left in charge of consul from Dire Dawa.

As far as I can ascertain, French Minister has not yet given Abyssinian Government assurance regarding Tsana. After consulting Count Colli I had decided to give him some days' grace before broaching matter to him direct. This sudden departure has unfortunately upset my plan.

[J 2389/19/1]

No. 125.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Maclean (Addis Ababa.)(Nos. 95 and 96.)
(Telegraphic.)*Foreign Office, August 27, 1926.*

(R.) YOUR telegram No. 130 of 24th August: Abyssinian protest to League against Tsana Agreement.

Entire correspondence, including League letter to Ras Taffari of 22nd July, has been published, and copies go to you by bag to-day. League merely stated that Ras's letter had been circulated to all members, and asked for reply by telegraph whether he wished question included on agenda of Council's September session. British and Italian Governments in their replies have made it clear that they are in no way opposed to consideration of question by League. (End of R.)

(Confidential.)

Ras Taffari has now telegraphed to the League promising reply by 10th September, before which he desires no further steps taken.

Please telegraph if you can discover whether date is specified, as earliest by which letter can reach Geneva by post, and, if so, what letter contains, or whether the Abyssinian Government are still considering their reply and intend to telegraph it on that date, and, if so, why delay is necessary.

[J 2396/19/1]

No. 126.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Maclean (Addis Ababa.)(No. 97.)
(Telegraphic.)*Foreign Office, August 27, 1926.*

YOUR telegram No. 131 of 25th August: French attitude to Tsana negotiations.

Since despatch of my telegram No. 88 of 9th August French Government have promised written confirmation of instructions sent to your French colleague in form which we can publish. It is therefore unnecessary for you to say anything to Chargé d'Affaires.

No. 127.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 2.)(No. 138.)
(Telegraphic.)*Addis Ababa, September 1, 1926.*

YOUR telegrams Nos. 95 and 96.

No letter has been sent by Abyssinian Government, who are still discussing (in Council of Advisers) whether they will ask for inclusion of Anglo-Italian question in agenda for September session or for adjournment to next year. Telegram, however, will be sent before 10th September reporting the decision.

Ras Taffari informed oriental secretary of this in strict confidence.

No. 128.

[J 2499/19/1]

Mr. Henderson to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 6.)

(No. 571.)

Ramleh, August 28, 1926.

Sir,

I HAVE read with interest the minutes of the meeting held at the Foreign Office on the 21st July last to discuss the opening of negotiations with the Abyssinian Government for the Lake Tsana concession.

2. No account would appear to have been taken therein as to the possible advantages which might result if the goodwill and even active co-operation of the Egyptian Government in the scheme could first be secured.

3. It is undeniably the case, and has throughout been publicly stated, that the dam is intended for the benefit of Egypt as well as the Sudan. All the available statistical data have, I believe, been procured through and at the expense of the Egyptian Ministry of Public Works. On the face of it this would seem to entitle the Egyptian Government to be consulted in the matter.

4. The actual advantages which I have in mind are as follows:—

- (1.) If Egyptian goodwill is ensured from the outset, they will be less likely to use their influence in Abyssinia secretly to undermine Mr. Bentinck's efforts. Conversely, Egyptian co-operation is calculated to lessen to some extent Abyssinian suspicions.
- (2.) Useful pressure might be brought to bear by the Egyptian Government on Abyssinian religious prejudices and obstructiveness through the Egyptian Coptic influence in the country. The Abuna, for example, is an Egyptian ecclesiastic.
- (3.) Egyptian financial support would be more readily forthcoming if the Egyptian Government were taken into our confidence from the beginning of these negotiations.

5. Objections to the enlistment of Egyptian co-operation might lie in the opportunity which it might afford the Egyptian Government to put forward possibly excessive demands as regards the disposal of the additional volumes of water procured by the dam, or to insist on the nomination of an Egyptian to assist Mr. Bentinck in his negotiations. But if Egypt is to give financial assistance, she would in any case have to be consulted as regards the utilisation of additional water supplies. Nor is it likely that the Egyptian Government would press for the appointment of an Egyptian colleague for Mr. Bentinck. If they did express a wish to give the British Minister definite support, it might prove not unprofitable to accept the services at a later stage of an Anglo-Egyptian official of the Ministry of Public Works to give advice on technical matters.

6. It is of course also conceivable that the Egyptian Government, even if asked to do so, might decline to assist in any way in endeavouring to obtain Abyssinia's consent to the construction of the dam. In that case, however, our position would in no respect have been weakened by our having invited their co-operation.

7. I would suggest that Lord Lloyd's opinion might be sought on the point which I have thus ventured to raise.

I have, &c.

NEVILLE HENDERSON,
Acting High Commissioner.

No. 129.

Mr. Maclean to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 9)(No. 141.)
(Telegraphic.)*Addis Ababa, September 8, 1926.*

YOUR telegram No. 96.

The Mayor of Addis Ababa and the keeper of the archives left for Geneva on 6th September. They are said to be charged with a message to the League of Nations to the effect that Abyssinia puts herself in the hands of the League and asks for

[15702]

justice, but as far as I can ascertain are not instructed to conduct Ethiopia's case before the League of Nations. It is not impossible that Abyssinian Government hope that delegation will arrive too late for the session, thus disposing of the matter for this year. A rumour which may be inspired is circulating in the town that the League of Nations is so much influenced by England and Italy that the decision must be against Abyssinia.

Austrian consul (see my telegram No. 140) did not leave on 6th September, but Ras Tafari, though very secretive, did not deny that he was being sent as a propagandist agent. I am inclined to discredit entirely the suggestion of association with the Soviets.

No. 130.

Consul London to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 9.)

(No. 180.)

(Telegraphic.)

FOLLOWING from Mr. Cadogan:—

Geneva, September 8, 1926.

"Italian delegation have received telegram from Rome dated 5th September reporting receipt of telegram from Italian Minister at Addis Ababa to the effect that Ras Tafari has announced his determination to bring question of Italian-British exchange of notes before Council at the present session, and he anticipated that Abyssinian cause will be triumphant.

"Italian delegation fear that this apparent change of attitude means that Abyssinian Government have received assurances of support."

[J 2571/19/1]

No. 131.

The Marquess of Crewe to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 15.)

(No. 1747.)

Sir,

Paris, September 14, 1926.

AS Mr. Phipps had not yet received from M. Berthelot the written communication mentioned in my despatch No. 1577 of the 19th ultimo respecting the instructions which the French Government sent to their representative at Addis Ababa regarding Anglo-Italian desiderata in Abyssinia, he asked M. Berthelot this afternoon whether he could be supplied with this promised communication.

2. M. Berthelot showed Mr. Phipps a letter which he had drafted to him on the subject, but which M. Briand had thought it undesirable to send, inasmuch as its publication might give umbrage to the Italian Government, as showing undue discrimination against them in favour of His Majesty's Government. Mr. Phipps thereupon enquired whether he could assure you that the French Government would have no objection to your stating in Parliament that the French Minister in Abyssinia had been instructed to maintain a friendly and sympathetic neutrality towards Anglo-Italian desiderata in that country, and to inform the Abyssinian Government that the French Government did not consider that the requirements of His Majesty's Government in regard to Lake Tsana could be in any way detrimental to Abyssinian interests. M. Berthelot seemed to be relieved at this proposed solution of the question, and declared that the French Government would have no objection whatever to your making a statement to this effect in Parliament.

I have, &c.

CREWE.

[J 2562/19/1]

No. 132.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Henderson (Cairo).

(No. 1079.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 22, 1926.

IN your despatch No. 571 of the 28th ultimo the possible advantages were discussed of an invitation to the Egyptian Government to take an active part in the negotiations with the Abyssinian Government for the Lake Tsana concession.

2. This point has been considered frequently in the course of the last few years, and it is felt that on the whole it will be impolitic to bring Egypt into the negotiations until success seems more or less assured.

3. It would not be possible now to offer to Egypt, as the price of her assistance, any definite percentage of the water which will be made available when the works at Lake Tsana are finished. When the dam has been constructed, if that is effected fairly soon, Egypt might perhaps for some years take a high percentage of the amount available, but eventually the Sudan will require and expect to receive the whole, or almost the whole, on the hypothesis that by then Egypt's needs will be met by the dams at Gebel Aulia and Lake Albert plus the Sudd Channel.

4. Again, if we seek in advance Egyptian support, the value of which at Addis Ababa is at best doubtful, the Egyptian Government could be expected to try to drive a bargain, an attempt which would probably give rise to most undesirable controversy in the Chamber and the press.

5. On the other hand, if Mr. Bentinck is fortunate in the initial stages of his negotiations, the possibility might well be considered of inviting some suitable Egyptian, such as Abdul Hamid Pasha Suleiman or even Shafik Pasha, to accompany Mr. MacGregor to Addis Ababa in order to demonstrate to the Abyssinians that the technical experts of the Sudan and Egypt are agreed as to the necessity in the interests of both countries of getting the dam built.

6. The community of interest of the two countries in the matter has already been emphasised in the House of Commons, while in June last the Egyptian Government received copies of the Anglo-Italian notes. This appears to make any further communication to the Egyptians, official or unofficial, superfluous for the present.

7. But we have nothing to conceal, and should the Egyptian Government for their part approach you in the matter, there seems to be no objection to their being frankly informed that negotiations are to be reopened in the autumn.

8. Should such an enquiry touch upon the allocation of the water which the Tsana dam would make available, however, the Egyptian Government should be informed that consideration of this problem would be premature, since it must be decided in the light of the division of the Nile waters as a whole.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 2656/19/1]

No. 133.

Board of Trade to Foreign Office.—(Received September 24.)

Board of Trade, September 23, 1926.

Sir,

IN reply to your letter of the 10th August relating to the proposal to commence negotiations with the Abyssinian Government for a concession to regulate the waters of Lake Tsana, I am directed by the Board of Trade to state, for the information of Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain, that they concur in the proposal to instruct Mr. Bentinck to approach the Abyssinian Government on the lines indicated in the record of the meeting which was held in regard to this subject at the Foreign Office on the 21st July last.

I am, &c.

H. FOUNTAIN.

No. 134.

Consul London to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 2.)

(No. 15.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

YOUR telegram No. 95.

Governor of Addis Ababa called at League secretariat on 25th September and left letter of authority. He states he was leaving at once for Paris and would be back shortly, but he has not yet returned. Address no doubt obtainable from M. Lagarde, 148, Rue de Grenelle, Paris.

(Repeated to Paris.)

[15702]

[J 2772/19/1]

No. 135.

Mr. Maclean to Mr. Murray.—(Received October 6.)

Dear Murray,

Addis Ababa, September 1, 1926.

COULD you clear up some points on which I am doubtful? In writing my despatch No. 188 of to-day regarding the Ydlibi concession, I could not help feeling that the vague wording of the Anglo-Italian notes caused considerable uncertainty. My questions are these:—

1. Does the expression "west of Abyssinia" include what we have hitherto called "South-West Abyssinia"?
2. If not, where is the dividing line drawn?
3. Is the proposed British zone (inside the Italian zone) to be simply an area around Lake Tsana, or is it to include a zone from the source of the Nile through the lake to the Sudan?
4. Would it in any case include tributaries such as the Baro?

I know that the decision in respect of the Prasso and other concessions would seem to show that we have ceded our rights in the whole of the West and South-West Abyssinia; but, even so, no dividing line to the eastward appears to have been suggested, nor can I find any definite description of what the British zone within the Italian zone is to be. What would happen if a British firm wished to get a concession for a railway from Addis Ababa to the Sudan, which I think they would be entitled to do under article 9 of the Tripartite Agreement of 1906?

In any case I don't think Mrs. Louiso has much chance of British support, as the Ydlibi concession seems really to fall within Western Abyssinia. I suggested that she should try and receive the concession granted to her father, who is now a French subject, and as such I presume would have a right to French support; but I don't think this would be much good, as I fancy that she is hardly *persona grata* at the French Legation, and her father is certainly *persona very ingrata* with the Abyssinian Government.

Yours ever,
G. MACLEAN.

[J 2813/19/1]

No. 136.

Sir E. Drummond to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 12.)

Sir,

League of Nations, Geneva, October 8, 1926.

I HAVE the honour to communicate to you herewith a translation of a note which His Royal Highness the Ras Tafari, Heir Apparent and Regent of the Empire of Abyssinia, has addressed to me concerning the notes exchanged between His Majesty's Government and the Italian Government of the 14th and 20th December, 1925. The copy of the reply which I have sent to His Royal Highness the Ras Tafari is also forwarded herewith for your information.

The documents in question are being communicated to the members of the League of Nations and will be published in the "Official Journal" of the League.

I have, &c.

ERIC DRUMMOND, *Secretary-General*.

Enclosure 1 in No. 136.

Ras Tafari to Sir E. Drummond.

(Translation.)

PEACE be with you.

On the 19th June last I had the honour to send you, with the request that you would communicate it to the States members of the League of Nations, the protest which the Imperial Government felt called upon to make against the agreement concluded between the British and Italian Governments by an exchange of notes, dated the 14th and 20th December, 1925, concerning their co-operation in the

negotiations into which they contemplated entering with the Imperial Government in regard to their interests in Abyssinia.

The Imperial Government was very naturally troubled on learning that these two great Powers had come to an understanding as to their course of action towards a friendly country, which is, like them, a member of the League of Nations, without informing that country in advance.

The Imperial Government interpreted this as an indication of their intention to combine to exert pressure upon it in order to obtain certain economic advantages, if the Imperial Government should consider that the general interests of Abyssinia dictated that those advantages should be withheld.

As thus interpreted, the Anglo-Italian Agreement was incompatible with the terms of the Covenant, since it constituted an indirect threat to the secular territorial integrity and political independence of Abyssinia, which, under article 10, Great Britain and Italy, like the other members of the League, have undertaken to respect. In our view, under article 20 of the Covenant, they had no right to contract such an agreement; but as they had, of course, no intention of violating that article, their agreement could have no legal force in our regard, and must be deemed to be null and void.

Accordingly, the Imperial Government would have felt no further apprehension had not the two Powers severally and on the same day brought the agreement officially to its notice. This simultaneous and concerted notification could only be interpreted as the first symptom of the intention to exert pressure which the Imperial Government had from the outset thought it detected in their action.

Since then, in reply to the Imperial Government's protests, the two Powers have endeavoured to allay its apprehensions by emphasising their friendly intentions. The British Government has even communicated to the Imperial Government the statement made by Sir Austen Chamberlain on this subject in the House of Commons. Sir Austen solemnly declared that the two Powers did not intend "to divide the country economically," that their agreement "could have no binding effect upon the Abyssinian Government," and that it was not intended to be, and could not be, used "for the purpose of coercing the Abyssinian Government"; and he added that "the Abyssinian Government had a perfect right to judge what was in the interest of Abyssinia."

The Italian Government has also made similar declarations to us.

Further, the British Government announced that the two Powers intended to deposit the notes exchanged between them with the secretariat of the League of Nations, and the Imperial Government has been informed that these notes have already been registered.

In view of the fact that registration, as required by article 18 of the Covenant, is merely designed to give publicity, the Imperial Government does not feel justified in complaining of the carrying out of this formality. At the same time, remembering that in signing the Covenant it agreed to "the prescription of open, just and honourable relations between nations," the Imperial Government feels entitled and bound to request you to register and publish the present letter, together with the notes in question, in order that the public may be acquainted with the Imperial Government's views on these notes, and with the reassuring replies which have been made to its protests.

All the members of the League of Nations will then know beyond doubt that, far from having given any undertaking whatever in this matter to the two Powers concerned, the Imperial Government retains, as the British and Italian Governments themselves have stated, full and complete freedom to decide as to any requests which may be made to it, and has a perfect right to judge what is in the interest of Abyssinia.

Given in the city of Addis Ababa this 30th day of Nakasié, 1918 (September 4, 1926).

Enclosure 2 in No. 136.

Sir E. Drummond to Ras Tafari.

(Translation.)

Sir,

Geneva, October 8, 1926.

IN a letter, dated the 30th Nakasié, 1918 (September 4, 1926), accompanied by a translation into French, your Imperial and Royal Highness informed me that your Highness desired that that letter be registered and published, together with the notes

exchanged between the British and Italian Governments on the 14th and 20th December, 1925.

In compliance with your Highness's wishes, I shall circulate your letter to the members of the League of Nations and publish it in the "Official Journal."

As regards the question of registration, however, your Highness will permit me to observe that your letter, being a unilateral declaration, cannot be regarded as a treaty or international engagement within the meaning of article 18 of the Covenant; and the practice which has hitherto been followed affords no precedent which justified me in having your letter registered and published in the Treaty Series. A suitable reference will, however, be inserted in the Treaty Series at the end of the text of the notes exchanged between the British and Italian Governments.

Further, your letter will be specially forwarded to the British and Italian Governments, which are directly interested.

I feel confident that this course will meet the wishes expressed in your letter of the 30th Nahasié, 1918 (September 4, 1926).

ERIC DRUMMOND.

[J 2813/19/1]

No. 137.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 247.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, October 16, 1926.

LETTER has been received from League of Nations forwarding note addressed to League by the Abyssinian Government dated 4th September concerning notes exchanged between His Majesty's Government and Italian Government, and League's reply. Correspondence in question, which has been specially communicated to the two interested Governments, has been circulated to all members of League.

Please inform Italian Government that His Majesty's Government propose to acknowledge receipt of League's letter, but to take no further action.

[J 2772/19/1]

No. 138.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir Graham (Rome).

(No. 1438.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 20, 1926.

I TRANSMIT to you herewith copies of unofficial correspondence with His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Addis Ababa in regard to the definition of the eastern limits of that part of Abyssinia in which His Majesty's Government have renounced their economic conditions in favour of the Italian Government in return for their support in connection with Lake Tsana.*

2. I shall be glad to learn your Excellency's views on the suggested definition, and in particular whether you consider that it would be likely to prove acceptable to the Italian Government in the event of its being regarded as satisfactory by Mr. Maclean and the Sudan Government. Should you think that it would be better to say nothing to the Italian Government at this stage, some such understanding of what we mean by the "west of Abyssinia" will be of help to British representatives at Addis Ababa.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 2772/19/1]

No. 139.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Henderson (Cairo).

(No. 1166.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 20, 1926.

I TRANSMIT to you herewith copies of unofficial correspondence with His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Addis Ababa and of a despatch to His Majesty's Ambassador at Rome regarding the possibility of defining the eastern limits of that part of Abyssinia in which His Majesty's Government have renounced their economic

* Nos. 135 and 136.

ambitions in favour of the Italian Government in return for their support in connection with Lake Tsana.*

2. I shall be glad if you will obtain the observations of the Sudan Government on the definition proposed in this correspondence.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 2772/19/1]

No. 140.

Mr. J. Murray to Mr. Maclean (Addis Ababa).

Foreign Office, October 21, 1926.

Dear Maclean,

I WILL do my best to reply to the questions which you raised in your letter of the 1st September in connection with our renunciation in favour of Italy of economic ambitions in Western Abyssinia, but you will appreciate that our views must be looked on as provisional for the time being.

So far as is known here, the first time that Italy formulated a demand in writing for an exclusive zone of economic influence was in November 1919, but the Foreign Office were aware before that date that this was the Italian aim. The expression "an exclusive economic influence in the west of Ethiopia and in the whole of the territory to be crossed by the railway (joining Eritrea to Italian Somaliland)" figured in the Italian memorandum of November 1919 and is reproduced in the notes exchanged with Italy at the end of last year. We know, in fact, from Sir Ronald Graham that in Italian eyes this is all that they got in return for giving us their support over Lake Tsana.

So far as we know, in the course of the explanations sought by and given to the French Government during the early part of this year the Italians avoided defining the eastern limit of this zone. So far as we are concerned such a definition hardly appears to be of great practical importance at this stage, though it would be a convenience for both the British and Italian representatives at Addis Ababa to know exactly whether British concessionaires could or could not expect the support of His Majesty's Legation. As Abyssinia is gradually opened up, the need for a definition will make itself increasingly felt, and for this reason it may be desirable to examine now how far it may be possible in the light of past negotiations with Italy to find the basis for an equitable definition.

In the Anglo-Italian Protocol of the 24th March, 1891, defining the line of demarcation between British and Italian spheres of influence from the River Juba to the Blue Nile, the British sphere is described as lying to the south of latitude 6° N. and west of longitude 35° E., and provision is made whereby, if future explorations should show occasion, the line following the 6th parallel of north latitude and the 35th degree of east longitude may by common agreement be amended in its details in accordance with the hydrographic and orographic conditions of the country. The British spheres of influence thus defined cover those parts of Abyssinia neighbouring the Sudan, on the one hand, and Kenya and Uganda, on the other, though the hinterland abutting on the Sudan is relatively a small area and covers little more than the Gambela salient. The Italians have always made it clear that the railway from Eritrea to Italian Somaliland would have to pass to the west of Lake Tsana, as under the Tripartite Agreement of 1906, article 4 (b), it is obliged to pass to the west of Addis Ababa, and the mountainous nature of the country east of Lake Tsana and north of Addis Ababa make a railway passing to the east of the lake and to the west of Addis Ababa practically impossible.

In these circumstances, the Italians can claim with some justice that the definition of their zone as "the west of Ethiopia and the whole of the territory to be crossed by the railway" must apply to all territory west of Lake Tsana.

On the other hand, we can reasonably claim that our renunciation of economic ambitions in this zone, which is very much larger than that reserved to us under the 1891 protocol, does not extend south of latitude 6° N., as the western end of the zone south of that latitude is the very part of Abyssinia from which the most troublesome raids into British territory are constantly occurring.

In view of the above considerations, the zone in which we have renounced our economic ambitions in favour of the Italians might be defined as lying to the west of longitude 37° 30' and to the north of latitude 6°.

* Nos. 135, 136 and 138.

We should be glad to know what you think of this definition and whether you regard it as a fair interpretation of the Anglo-Italian Agreement.

Your questions Nos. 3 and 4 are, I think, due to a misapprehension. We neither sought for nor secured from the Italians any British zone round Lake Tsana. All we asked for and obtained was the right of passage, so far as the Italians are concerned, of a motor road to connect Lake Tsana with the Sudan, probably at Gallabat, to facilitate the passage of stores and material in connection with the construction and subsequent maintenance of the dam.

We are inviting the views of Sir Ronald Graham and of the Sudan Government on the definition of the eastern limit of the Italian zone suggested above.

Yours ever,
J. MURRAY.

[J 2813/19/1]

No. 141.

Foreign Office to League of Nations.

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 21, 1926.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th October last, forwarding a translation of a note addressed to you by His Royal Highness Ras Tafari, heir apparent and Regent of the Empire of Abyssinia, concerning the notes exchanged between His Majesty's Government and the Italian Government on the 14th and 20th December, 1925, together with a copy of your reply to Ras Tafari's communication.

2. His Majesty's Government take note of the fact that these documents have been communicated to the members of the League of Nations, and that they will be published in the "Official Journal" of the League.

I am, &c.
JOHN MURRAY.

[J 2898/19/1]

No. 142.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 22.)

(No. 215.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

YOUR telegram No. 247.

Italian Government will follow similar course.

Rome, October 22, 1926.

[J 2972/19/1]

No. 143.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 1.)

(No. 913.)

Sir,

Rome, October 29, 1926.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 215 of the 22nd October, I have the honour to transmit herewith translation of a *note verbale* of the 26th October received from the Italian Government.

I have, &c.
R. GRAHAM.

Enclosure in No. 143.

Note verbale.

(Translation.)

IN reply to the *note verbale* of the 19th October, the Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs have the honour to inform the British Embassy that the Royal Government agree with the proposal merely to acknowledge receipt to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations of his letter, enclosing copy of the note sent to the League by the

Abyssinian Government on the 4th September, with reference to the Anglo-Italian exchange of notes on the 14th-20th December, 1925, and also the reply from the League of Nations.

The Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs have already taken action in the sense indicated by means of a letter sent to-day to Sir Eric Drummond.

Rome, October 26, 1926.

[J 2973/19/1]

No. 144.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 1.)

(No. 919.)

Sir,

Rome, October 29, 1926.

I HAVE the honour to report that Commendatore Gasparini, the Governor-General of Eritrea, paid me a friendly visit recently. Commendatore Gasparini said that the effect of the Anglo-Italian agreement regarding Lake Tsana on the relations between Abyssinia and Eritrea had exceeded his worst previsions. It had done much to destroy the more cordial relations with the Abyssinian border chiefs which he had been able to establish, and had had a detrimental influence on trade between his colony and Abyssinia. He had argued out the matter with several of the more important Abyssinian chieftains and had been able to convince some of them that the Anglo-Italian agreement was to the benefit of Abyssinia. But one of these chiefs, whom he had induced to proceed to Addis Ababa in order to place the question in this light, had at once fallen into disgrace there and had narrowly escaped imprisonment. Commendatore Gasparini was pessimistic as to our ever being able to induce the Abyssinians to agree to British or Italian requirements as expressed under the agreement. The Lake Tsana question especially had become a national one, and we must expect obstinate resistance.

2. Commendatore Gasparini said that the Gash flood had been extraordinarily plentiful this year, and he did not imagine that Sudan interests would have suffered from the Italian irrigation schemes on his reaches of the river. He had grown some quite respectable cotton, but the present slump in cotton prices was a disaster for him, and he had to consider seriously whether it would be possible for the colony to continue cotton cultivation.

I have, &c.
R. GRAHAM.

[J 3031/19/1]

No. 145.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 8.)

(No. 927.)

Sir,

Rome, November 3, 1926.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge receipt of your despatch No. 1438 of the 20th ultimo in regard to the definition of the eastern limits of that part of Abyssinia in which His Majesty's Government have renounced their economic ambition in favour of the Italian Government.

2. I would refer you to my despatch No. 530 of the 2nd July last. You will observe that when the Italian Government were asked by the French Government to define the eastern limits of the zone in which they claimed exclusive economic interests, the Italian Government pointed out that the various areas described in article 4 of the Tripartite Agreement of 1906 had never been accurately defined, and indeed were hardly susceptible of close definition. But the Italian authorities assured me at the time that they were perfectly ready to enter upon a negotiation with the French Government for an exact definition of the zones in question. I have therefore no doubt that the Italian Government would be prepared to negotiate with His Majesty's Government on the subject.

[15702]

3. Although the limit assigned under your proposal to the area of Italian economic interests seems to me very reasonable, I am unable to state whether the Italian Government would regard it as satisfactory without first sounding them on the subject. Once I addressed such an enquiry to them, it would be difficult to refrain from embarking upon the negotiation, and before doing this there is one point upon which I should be grateful for information. Would a settlement defining the limits of the British and Italian zones have to be consecrated in an exchange of notes, and, if so, would these notes have to be communicated to the League of Nations, and therefore brought to public knowledge? If this would have to be done, I would suggest, in view of the extreme susceptibility of the Abyssinian Government in such matters, as already brought to our painful experience, that it would be preferable to defer the negotiation with the Italian Government until a settlement of the Lake Tsana question has been reached with the Abyssinians. I would propose that, as suggested in the last sentence of your despatch under reference, it would be better to say nothing to the Italian Government at this stage, but to lay down what is meant by His Majesty's Government by the definition "west of Abyssinia" for the guidance of British representatives at Addis Ababa. In the somewhat unlikely event of the matter being raised by the Italian Government owing, possibly, to some British concession being granted in a doubtful area, it would then be time enough to propose to them an exact definition of our respective zones.

I have, &c.
R. GRAHAM.

[J 3031/19/1]

No. 146.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 1571.)
Sir,

Foreign Office, November 13, 1926.

IN the light of the considerations adduced in your Excellency's despatch No. 927 of the 3rd instant, I have carefully considered the question of the definition of the eastern limits of the part of Abyssinia in which His Majesty's Government have renounced their economic ambition in favour of the Italian Government, and share your view that it will be better to say nothing to the Italian Government at this stage.

2. The subject need not be raised until the Italian Government themselves press for a definition or until some "border line" case at Addis Ababa makes it essential to take up a definite position. Meanwhile, His Majesty's Minister at that capital can be guided by the line suggested in Mr. Murray's private letter to Mr. Maclean, of which a copy was enclosed in my despatch No. 1435.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3443/19/1]

No. 147.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 31.)

(No. 221.)
Sir,

Addis Ababa, November 24, 1926.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 372 of the 3rd November, enclosing copy of Rome despatch No. 919 of the 29th October recording a conversation between Sir Ronald Graham and the Governor of Eritrea. According to Commendatore Gasparini, the recent Anglo-Italian notes have had a detrimental effect on Italian interests in Northern Abyssinia. It may therefore not be out of place here to put on record the manner in which, out of excessive loyalty to the spirit (not the letter) of the agreement, His Majesty's Government have discouraged British enterprise throughout Northern and Western Abyssinia since the conclusion of the agreement.

2. I would venture to draw attention to the following cases:—

(1.) In your despatch No. 279 of the 17th November, 1925, regarding the proposed railway from Addis Ababa to Jimma and Gambella, which was reserved to British enterprise by article 9 of the Tripartite Agreement of

1906, the following sentence occurs: "Such a railway would also, in my opinion, be an 'economic concession' within the meaning of the proposed exchange of notes with the Italian Government, and therefore, if this exchange materialises, it appears to me that we shall (so far as we can do so without the assent of France) have transferred to Italy our rights under the first sentence of article 9 of the Tripartite Agreement."

(2.) According to your despatch No. 16 of the 11th January, 1926, regarding the attempt of M. Prasso to elicit the co-operation of British capital in exploiting the rich gold and platinum deposits in the Walega province of Western Abyssinia it was made quite clear by your Department to a representative of the firm of Messrs. Johnson, Matthey and Co. "that our recently concluded arrangement left us no option but to support the Italians in endeavouring to secure for their nationals all economic concessions in the area in which M. Prasso was interested." The representative of Messrs. Johnson, Matthey and Co. was further informed that if his company "insisted on trying to give the venture the character of a British company, not only would they have to count on Count Colli's opposition, but you would be obliged to stand in with him, and in those circumstances it would be unlikely that the Abyssinian Government would agree to what M. Prasso and the firm wished to obtain." M. Prasso then sold his very valuable concession to a French company—the Société minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie (my despatch No. 73 of the 5th April, 1926).

(3.) In April, two Englishmen, claiming to represent the Sudan Building and Agricultural Company, applied for permission to prospect for minerals to the south-west of Abyssinia, but so as not in any way to interfere with the Prasso concession (my telegram No. 33 of the 16th April, 1926). In your telegram No. 55 of the 26th May I was told that, as the Italian Government held that encouragement of the concession would be contrary to the spirit of our agreement, I was to inform the applicants that I could not help them.

(4.) In my despatch No. 145 of the 15th June last, I recorded a conversation with Colonel D. A. Sandford, D.S.O., representative of the Abyssinian Produce Company, who enquired as to the effect of the Anglo-Italian Agreement on British commercial enterprise in Gojam, where he had just been to try and open up trading centres with the Sudan. He feared that the interests of his (British) company would be adversely affected. In your despatch No. 243 of the 16th July last, you laid down that "the recent agreement cannot affect British interests already established, nor is its operation likely to affect the flow of trade towards the Sudan so long as this country affords the most economical outlet for exports from Abyssinia. On the other hand, British concession seekers will not be able to look to His Majesty's Government for support for their claims in the area covered by the agreement."

(5.) It is, moreover, unlikely that we shall be able to assist Mrs. Louiso and her supporters, Messrs. Enever and Fraser, in their desire to obtain the renewal of the concession granted to her father on the Baro River, although this concession lies to the west of longitude 34 east (see Mr. Maclean's despatch No. 188 of the 1st September, 1926).

3. This self-denying attitude has, I may remind you, Sir, been adopted by us at once, although, by our agreement with Italy, we are only bound to adopt it after (not before) having obtained the desired concession at Lake Tsana with the help of the Italian Government. The people who seem likely to benefit are the Germans, Americans and French rather than the Italians.

4. The decision of the Abyssinian Government that no British capital was to be employed in connection with the concession granted last January to Mr. Montague in Walega, Gojam and Wollo may have been due to the excessive irritation evident at that time on account of our agreement with Italy, although Ras Tafari would not admit this (see my despatches Nos. 13 and 134 of the 30th January and the 4th June).

5. If the hostility and suspicion subsequently aroused in this country by the agreement was concentrated on the Italians rather than on the British, I think the Italians must blame themselves and not us. The reasons for the difference in the attitude of the Abyssinians towards the two countries were, I think, fourfold:—

(1.) Just at a time when my Italian colleague and I had succeeded, as we thought, in preparing the minds of the Abyssinians to receive our coming communi-

cation in a reasonable spirit, M. Mussolini gave vent to some bombastic speeches about expansion which irritated the Germans, alarmed the Turks, and both irritated and alarmed the Abyssinians. England was then thought merely to be conniving at the Italian crime (see last paragraphs of my telegrams Nos. 43, 70 and 76 of the 25th March, the 15th May and the 21st May).

- (2.) The Abyssinians were then reminded of the disgraceful performance of Italy at Corfu in 1923, and of the supineness of the League of Nations on that occasion. They heard, too, that England alone had endeavoured to obtain something approaching fair play for the Greeks.
- (3.) You, Sir, made certain statements in the House of Commons and to the League of Nations which were communicated to Ras Tafari, and which had a distinctly calming effect on the Abyssinian mentality (see your telegram No. 76 of the 14th July and your telegram to Rome repeated to Addis Ababa, No. 201 of the 30th July).
- (4.) The word of an English gentleman still, I rejoice to think, carries greater weight in this country, as in most other countries, than that of the "foreigner." Thus explanations given by a representative of His Majesty's Government are still likely to receive greater credence than explanations given by a representative of any other country.

I have, &c.
C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 3444/19/1]

No. 148.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 31.)

(No. 222.)

Sir,

I HAVE read in the Confidential Print Mr. Henderson's despatch No. 571 of the 28th August and your reply No. 1079 of the 22nd September regarding the possibility of inviting the Egyptian Government to take an active part in the negotiations with the Abyssinian Government for the Tsana concession.

2. In this connection I venture to remind you, sir, that in article 3 of the treaty of the 15th May, 1902, upon which our case is based, no mention is made of the Egyptian Government, but only of His Majesty's Government and the Government of the Sudan. Thus, as far as the Abyssinian Government are concerned, the Egyptian Government appear to me to have no standing whatsoever, and for this reason I can see no possible advantage to us in our negotiations in inviting the assistance or co-operation of Egypt. On the contrary, I consider that we should weaken our case. As you are already aware, I have jealously insisted with my Belgian colleague that, as the question of Lake Tsana was one between ourselves and the Abyssinian Government only, in view of our treaty rights, I could not ask for his assistance (see my despatch No. 98 of the 11th August, 1925). This view seems also to have been held by Ras Tafari when he told my Italian colleague, with reference to the visit of the Grand Duke Alexander of Russia in 1925, that he would not negotiate about Lake Tsana with anyone but myself (see paragraphs 37 and 38 of my annual report for 1925).

3. If at some future date we should be fortunate enough to construct the dam and should, in view of the geographical position of Egypt, allow the Egyptian Government to share the benefits with us, that, it seems to me, would be a matter between ourselves and that Government, in which the Abyssinians would have no concern. I consider, however, that it is important that we should never lose sight of the fact (a) that the strength of our case lies in our treaty with the Emperor Menelik; (b) that the Egyptian Government, not having been a party to that treaty, have no rights; (c) that the only benefit which they can derive will be due to the friendship of His Majesty's Government or to their joint interest with the Sudan in the waters of the Nile.

4. If at any stage in the negotiations we should care to take the Egyptian Government "into our confidence," or invite their financial assistance, is a matter upon which I do not feel competent to express an opinion. This would be no concern of the Abyssinian Government. As, however, the negotiations will presumably be above

board and there will, I trust, be nothing to conceal, the less confidential talk that takes place on the subject with other countries the better, and the less likelihood is there of suspicion and misunderstanding both at home and abroad such as was recently called forth by the Anglo-Italian exchange of notes.

5. I am doubtful how far the Coptic influence counts any longer in this country. The Abuna's influence is now, I think, practically nil, and there is a campaign on foot to get rid of the Coptic teachers at a school at Addis Ababa which is under the Abuna's protection.

I have, &c.
C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 3448/19/1]

No. 149.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 31.)

(No. 227. Confidential.)

Addis Ababa, November 29, 1926.

Sir,

I HAVE not yet telegraphed my views on the desirability or otherwise of immediately reopening the Tsana negotiations, the observations which I have been able to make during the last ten days not having been sufficient to justify me in reaching a definite conclusion on the subject. As, however, there is an opportunity to send a bag, I will record briefly what I have gathered thus far.

2. I arrived here on Friday night (19th November), and on the Saturday Ras Tafari enquired of my oriental secretary whether I was ready to negotiate about the question. He recommended in strict confidence to Mr. Zaphiro that he should advise me, as from himself, to begin to negotiate without informing my colleagues of the details or asking their advice. Mr. Zaphiro derived the impression that Ras Tafari wished to open the discussions, and that he even hoped that matters would advance sufficiently to enable him at some future date to find a pretext to visit London for the purpose of concluding an agreement.

3. I found my Italian colleague, though not in the best of health, in quite good spirits regarding the situation generally. The atmosphere was, he thought, favourable for me to start negotiations, especially as Ras Kassa is at present in Addis Ababa. Count Colli observed, however, that I should find great difficulty in connection with the arms question. Ras Tafari now admitted that Count Colli had been right in the advice he had given him about a protest to the League of Nations at the Anglo-Italian agreement, and that he (Ras Tafari) had been wrongly advised by others; in fact, Count Colli and myself were the only foreigners he could now trust; but though we said we were his friends, yet whenever he wanted arms it was we who made the difficulties.

4. My French colleague complained that for the last year he had been in a most embarrassing situation, not knowing exactly where he stood. He was not a party to our agreement, yet he could not give the Abyssinians any advice or assistance when they appealed to him. No one, he said, either the Abyssinians or himself, suspected us of any ulterior motives, but he could not say as much of the Italians. Ras Tafari had suggested to M. Gaussen that he should discuss the general situation with Ras Kassa. M. Gaussen had accordingly done so and, of course, the Tsana question had been raised. M. Gaussen then told Ras Kassa what he had already told Ras Tafari, that the Abyssinian Government would be well advised to reach a speedy and amicable settlement with His Majesty's Government, for Great Britain would never drop the Tsana question. He had found Ras Kassa already favourable to a satisfactory settlement. The Swiss engineer, M. Max Zorg, who had gone to Lake Tsana last January and returned about May (see my despatch No. 127 of the 29th May), had left the country for Europe about a month ago. He had, presumably on instructions from Ras Tafari, carefully avoided the French Minister—who protects the Swiss—and M. Gaussen had no idea of the nature of his report. Count Colli did not think the report could be a really serious one—merely, he thought, based on that of Messrs. Grabham and Black, which had been lent to M. Zorg.

5. My Turkish colleague, who is a disinterested, if perhaps a shrewd, observer, hoped that I had remarked the great change which had intervened in political circles here. Now all was calm, whereas when I left in June there had been intense excitement, so much so, I am told, that the Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis had started making certain secret enquiries about the dispositions and conditions of the Abyssinian army

in the event of what the market-place said had already broken out, namely, war with Italy. The great change Munir Bey ascribed chiefly to the reassuring effect of your statements in Parliament which you had telegraphed out here for communication to Ras Taffari. Everyone, he said, trusted us. We had an excellent case based as it was on our treaty with Menelik. He could not understand why we had thought it necessary to ask the help of Italy, seeing that we were in such a far stronger position than the Italians whom no one trusted. He shared the view of my French colleague that we had greatly increased our difficulties, but, of course, he is a new arrival, and was not here in the days when the Italians were trying to thwart our efforts.

6. It must not be forgotten, however, that there are two uncertain factors with which we shall have to reckon. The one is the very serious illness of the Firaaurari Hapta Giorgis. If he should die, which is not improbable, both my French and Italian colleagues agree that Ras Taffari will be in a much weaker position. Though there may not be actual troubles, they think that there will be a lack of discipline throughout the country, especially when the Fitaaurari's successor will have to be chosen. There is likely to be a great deal of intriguing, the big chiefs may give trouble and the army may get out of hand. Attention is thus likely to become concentrated on internal questions. The other uncertain factor is the Empress. Her Majesty, according to my French colleague, has lately displayed a certain amount of interest in State affairs, but the result has usually been negative. It is far easier for Her Majesty to say "No" than "Yes." If her bishop should tell her to refuse the Tsana concession, no amount of arguments on the part of Ras Taffari and Ras Kassa as to the advantages for the country would be likely to prove availing against the dictates of the representative of her church.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.